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JPRS Report

Epidemiology

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JPRS-TEP-89-001

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INTER-AFRICAN

AIDS Spread in Africa Raises Cobalt Price

54002433 Helsinki HELSINGIN SANOMAT in Finnish
29 Nov 88 p 27

[Excerpt] The spread of AIDS in Africa will in the very near future cause a significant rise in cobalt prices. There is already a skilled labor shortage in the cooper mines of Zaire and Zambia. Cobalt is a byproduct from these mines. These two countries together produce over 75 percent of the Western world's cobalt. [passage omitted]

GHANA

Resettlement of Onchocerciasis-Free Zones

54000027 Accra PEOPLE'S DAILY GRAPHIC in English
3 Nov 88 p 16

[Article by George Sydney]

[Text] The National Onchocerciasis (River Blindness) Secretariat is busily drawing up plans for the resettlement of farmers and fresh water fishermen in oncho-free zones in the country, the Secretariat source has disclosed at Wa.

The zones, which are located along fertile river valleys in the northern sector of the country and part of the Volta Region, are ideal for grain cultivation, livestock production and fishing but were abandoned several decades ago by farmers and fishermen fleeing the scourge of oncho.

The formerly infested zones have now been declared oncho-free and fit once more for agricultural and other economic activities following more than two decades of spraying of riverine areas with pesticide by helicopter to control the simulum fly which transmits the disease.

The Secretariat sources told the "Graphic" that the government attaches a lot of importance to the resettlement programme because most of the onchocerciasis free zones lie within the country's grain belt and have almost unlimited potential for the production of rice, yam, sorghum, cattle and sheep.

He said as a first step in the rehabilitation programme implementation, attempts would be made to provide the basic infrastructure needed to resettle the farmers and the fishermen.

Farmers and fishermen who fled the formerly infested areas, the sources said, are to be located and invited to return to the fertile valleys where they would be assisted to resume farming, fishing and livestock production.

Steps will be taken to ensure that large-scale farmers do not take undue advantage of the resettlement programme to start commercial farming in the valleys or on farm-lands belonging to small-scale farmers who fled the fertile areas in the wake of the disease.

SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE

Increased Awareness of AIDS Problem Urged

54000030z Lisbon DIARIO DE LISBOA in Portuguese
5 Dec 88 p 10

[Text] Several cases of AIDS in Sao Tome and Principe were confirmed by Lazaro Baptista, director of preventive medicine and national coordinator of the fight against AIDS. He made this statement over national radio on the occasion of World AIDS Day.

Lazaro Baptista said that his country's Health Ministry is doing all it can to come to grips with the problem which has not been well defined yet, and it is necessary to convince people of the real danger which the illness presents in Sao Tome and Principe.

The coordinator of the fight against AIDS said that the existing AIDS testing laboratory in the country, provided by Sweden, is not being used to its full extent.

"At this moment we are trying to analyze all units of blood to be used in transfusions" and "to be very careful with respect to needles and other perforating instruments," he said.

Lazaro Baptista mentioned that the risks of sexual contamination were the most difficult to prevent and said that "in that respect education is struggling against centuries of behavior and habits," but the Sao Tomean authorities hope to "change things."

SOUTH AFRICA

80 Percent of AIDS Cases From Johannesburg

54000026b Johannesburg BUSINESS DAY in English
30 Nov 88 p 1

[Article by Edyth Bulbring]

[Text] Of more than 1,650 people reported to have been infected by AIDS, 80

live in Johannesburg, chairman of the Health and Environmental Committee of the Johannesburg City Council, Marietta Marx, said in a statement last night.

Since AIDS was first diagnosed in SA in 1982, a further 174 cases have been reported, of which 60

have been in Johannesburg, Marx said.

The Minister of National Health and Population Development estimated there were 10,000 infected people in SA, she said.

—Johannesburg's Health Department has mounted an anti-AIDS programme at the city hall with videos highlighting the spread of the disease, and preventive measures. The videos will be shown until Friday.

High Rate of Tuberculosis in Township Schools
54000026a Johannesburg THE STAR in
English 2 Dec 88 p 2

[Article by Toni Younghusband, Medical Reporter]

[Text] Tests at 33 schools have shown that more than 2,000 primary schoolchildren in the kwaThema and Tsakane townships near Springs have tuberculosis.

A spokesman for the South African National Tuberculosis Association (Santa) said 22,893 primary school children had been tested on the East Rand in five months and 2,122 were positive for primary tuberculosis.

But the project has now run out of money says Mrs Julia van Heerden, Santa's public relations officer.

A R10,000 contribution by the Ikageng Women's Group launched the project in conjunction with health officials from Santa.

The Springs Rotary Club provided the children with the supplementary nutrition essential in the treatment of TB.

State health authorities provided the medicine.

Mr Alex Sikiotis, of the Rotary Club, said: "Rotary provides those identified as having TB with one nutritional meal a day so that at the end of their medication they do not get re-infected.

"What we would like to do is to test every child within a 20 km radius of Springs. We believe TB is the biggest problem facing South Africa's health."

The Ikageng Women's Group will continue to feed the infected schoolchildren during the school holidays.

TANZANIA

Cooperative AIDS Prevention Project With Norway Initiated
54002447 Oslo AFTENPOSTEN in Norwegian
8 Dec 88 p 4

[Text] A group of researchers in Bergen are going to cooperate with colleagues in Tanzania on a project to devise preventive measures against AIDS. This joint project is to continue for several years. Efforts will be concentrated on the two northern-most regions, Arusha and Kilimanjaro. The researchers are affiliated with the Institute of International Health at the University of Bergen, and they are credited with having introduced HIV testing of blood donors in hospitals of the two regions.

ZAMBIA

Malaria Threat Stressed, Surveillance Committee Formed
54000021b Lusaka TIMES OF ZAMBIA in English
19 Nov 88 p 5

[Text] The nation has been urged not to concentrate on the prevention of the spread of AIDS ignoring malaria which had claimed many lives.

This call was made in Livingstone yesterday by Southern Province medical officer, Dr Elisha Chipandwe, during the launching of the district malaria surveillance committee.

Dr Chipandwe stressed: "We cannot afford to ignore malaria as figures speak for themselves that more people died of malaria during the year."

During the first quarter of this year 93,683 cases of malaria were reported at various hospitals in Southern Province. In Livingstone 8,210 cases were reported of which 140 people died, 96 of them children.

The malaria surveillance committee comprising senior level staff from different walks of life has been formed and is chaired by Cde Edwin Miti, personnel and public relations manager for Livingstone Motor Assemblers (LMA).

Other executive members are vice-chairman Dr Solomon Mwale, a private practitioner, secretary is Cde Mulenga Ng'andu, principal of Musaya secondary school, while Cde Charles Lwanga is vice-secretary.

Others are Cde Magagani Handila, treasurer, chief health inspector Cde Fred Muwanei and TIMES OF ZAMBIA chief reporter John Mulando who is publicity secretary.

Matrons Olive Ng'andu and Mirriam Puta, both from Livingstone General Hospital, and Cde Manuel Shamilimo from the provincial medical officer's office are committee members while LMA general manager Winter Lemba is patron.

Ministry Equipped for Malaria Control
54000021a Lusaka TIMES OF ZAMBIA in English
18 Nov 88 p 2

[Article by Zana]

[Text] The Ministry of Health has ordered enough chemicals and sprayers to enable district councils to spray as many houses as possible to prevent malaria which has claimed over 75,500 lives in the past three years.

Deputy director of medical services Dr Sam Nyaywa said yesterday the ministry would encourage district councils to spray houses at least twice a year in March and November to control mosquitoes.

During the malaria eradication week, to be launched on 23 November, the public would be educated on basic mosquito control techniques as the rainy season has begun and cases of malaria were expected to increase, Cde Nyaywa said.

In Lusaka the nation-wide malaria control week would be launched from Kamwala clinic and the rest of the nation would be expected to observe the week.

Dr Nyaywa said the public should consider growing crops like groundnuts and pumpkins in backyard gardens at least 100 metres away from houses instead of maize which harboured mosquitoes.

Red Locust Threat Under Control, Recurrence Feared

54000021c Lusaka ZAMBIA DAILY MAIL in English
21 Nov 88 p 1

[Text] Although the red locust threat has been brought under control, fears have been expressed that there might be a recurrence of the pests next year.

The population of the migratory African locust, which invaded Namwala and Nakambala in Southern Province recently is expected to increase after the rainy season and may spread to other parts of the country if effective control measures are not taken.

This was disclosed by deputy director of the International Red Locust Control Organisation (IRLCO), Cde Erikana Byaruhanga in Ndola yesterday.

He said although the locust invasion reported in Namwala and Nakambala was brought under control, most of the insects found had already mated and are expected to breed after the rainy season.

"The immediate threat is to crops sown by farmers during the rainy season which will be vulnerable because the locusts are just poised to start breeding and if we don't do something they might spread to other areas," Cde Byaruhanga said.

However, he said, the organisation had enough resources to spray the infested areas although these may be spread thinly if the outbreaks persist.

The African migratory locust is normally found in open grasslands or crop irrigated farms like the Nakambala Sugar Estate, but during the recent outbreak other areas of the province were also affected for the first time.

A team of scientists and field workers sent to the area found varying concentrations of both locusts with populations of up to 50 per square metre on the 30,000 hectares sprayed.

He said this was the first time in 40 years that Zambia had experienced a locust invasion of such magnitude, and by the end of last month 112,000 hectares had actually been found infested by the locusts.

Affected areas include Chipata, Namwala, outskirts of Lusaka, Kabwe, Sesheke, Kalabo and Lukanga Swamps, Cde Byaruhanga has appealed to the public to report any locust sightings to the nearest agricultural office or any government agents in their areas.

He also warned of the potential danger to Zambia posed by uncontrolled African migratory locusts in the Caprivi Strip of Namibia.

Update on AIDS-Related Issues

Access to Trial Drugs

54200017 Toronto *THE SUNDAY STAR* in English
20 Nov 88 p A12

[Text] London, Ont. (CP)—Medical, scientific and patient groups are collaborating in a plan that could give AIDS sufferers access to drugs not yet approved by the federal government.

They intend to form a committee that would develop a system to allow patients to enroll in programs offering dosages of any AIDS drugs under trial.

The plan was agreed to at a meeting here of doctors, clinical scientists, drug company representatives, government officials and members of AIDS patient and support groups.

The federal minister of health must approve the plan.

But the participants have come up with "a consensus that I think is a win-win situation for everyone involved," said Jeffrey Braff, president of the Canadian AIDS Society, an umbrella group for AIDS coalitions across Canada.

The agreement marks a break-through in a lengthy battle for access to experimental drugs, said Greig Layne, of the Vancouver-based Persons With AIDS Coalition.

"(The patient) would have to decide, weighing all the evidence that he's given, what the risks and benefits are for himself and for other people," Layne said. "At least he will have the choice to make."

The groups have to have the committee working within a few months.

In another AIDS development Friday, a B. C. health ministry official said a provincial study supports recent findings by a Montreal doctor suggesting that the AIDS virus is moving toward the heterosexual population.

"We are seeing a definite shift in AIDS cases away from homosexuals, slightly toward heterosexuals, female cases of all kinds and cases associated with needles," Dr Michael Rekart said in an interview.

Rekart, who is British Columbia's director of AIDS and sexually-transmitted-diseases control, cautioned that his study, based on about 440 AIDS cases, might not meet strict statistical requirements and should not create a panic.

Virus Moving

"But it worries me and it is definitely worth looking into and I will be looking into it," he said.

Earlier in the week, Dr Clement Olivier said his Montreal clinic has experienced a sharp increase in positive tests for the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which many scientists believe causes AIDS.

People now testing positive include a growing number of heterosexuals, said Olivier, whose downtown clinic is one of the busiest in Quebec.

AIDS attacks the body's immune system, leaving it vulnerable to other viruses. It is transmitted through blood and semen. Of the 2,118 known AIDS patients in Canada, 1,162 had died as of Nov 2.

Ribavirin Clinical Trial

54200017 Ottawa *THE OTTAWA CITIZEN* in English
1 Dec 88 pp A1, A20

[Excerpts] [Passage omitted] Today is World AIDS Day as designated by the World Health Organization.

In Canada, the Health Department plans to commemorate the day after shattering whatever apathy remains among Canadians with results from an explicit survey on teenage sexual behavior.

The results of the survey of 38,000 Canadians aged 11 to 21 showed only 11 per cent of females and 19 per cent of males who admitted to having sex "often" said they always use a condom. Children have sex as early as age 12, half the Grade 11s surveyed were sexually active and between 15 and 20 per cent of sexually active youths engaged in anal sex. [passage omitted]

In Canada, 2,181 Canadians have been diagnosed with clinical AIDS. Most are homosexuals. So far 1,202 people have died, including 22 children—most born to mothers with AIDS. [passage omitted]

A magic potion to halt the epidemic is still several years off, but the only AIDS-fighting drug approved in Canada and the United States offers some hope. American researchers recently confirmed that zidovudine—formerly called AZT—prolongs the survival of AIDS patients.

And a major clinical trial begins shortly in Canada of an anti-viral drug now used to treat lung infections in children that may inhibit the progress of the disease before the body's immune system is destroyed.

The research project, which starts in January, will involve about 50 patients in Ottawa-Carleton and 700 nationwide, said Dr Gary Garber, head of infectious diseases at the Ottawa General Hospital which is participating in the study.

The drug is Ribavirin. Laboratory evidence shows it can inhibit the AIDS virus, but the results aren't conclusive, Garber said. [passage omitted]

Among the other centres involved in the Canada-wide study are Winnipeg, Toronto, Halifax, Quebec City and Vancouver.

The drug will be tested on otherwise healthy people with HIV (human immunodeficiency virus), the sexually transmitted infection that precedes AIDS. Half the patients will be given Ribavirin and the other half will receive a placebo and be monitored for comparison.

Chief researcher Dr Chris Tsoukas, of Montreal General Hospital, said patients who qualify must be completely well and can't show any of the symptoms associated with progress of the virus, such as pneumonia, weight loss, diarrhea or fever.

"We're looking to see if the people on the drug have fewer AIDS-related illnesses in the long term," he said.

Study on Teenagers

54200017 Toronto THE GLOBE AND MAIL in
English 2 Dec 88 pp A1, 2

[Article by Christopher Waddell]

[Text] Almost half of Canadian students are sexually active by Grade 11, and are not getting the explicit classroom instruction they need on the dangers of AIDS, according to a study on AIDS and sexual attitudes of teenagers in Canada.

The study, released yesterday, found that in Grade 9, 31 per cent of boys and 21 per cent of girls reported having had sexual intercourse at least once. By Grade 11 that total rose to 49 per cent of boys and 46 per cent of girls, while 77 per cent of first-year college or university males and 73 per cent of females had intercourse at least once.

The study recommended courses in public and high schools on how to minimize the risks of diseases, especially acquired immune deficiency syndrome, when having sexual relations.

"Young people know quite a bit about AIDS," said Dr Allan King, a Queen's University professor who supervised the Canada Youth and AIDS study.

"At the same time they have not changed their behavior substantially in a way as to protect themselves from contracting AIDS," he said.

Dr King added that the lack of an adequate information base made it difficult to determine whether such attitudes among young people differ significantly from those of the general population regarding AIDS.

"Thus far, AIDS education for Canadian students has tended to be euphemistic and vague, lacking the clarity, frankness and completeness both desired and needed by young people," the study states.

The study, commissioned by the federal government, surveyed 38,000 Canadians between the ages of 11 to 21 drawn from grades 7, 9 and 11 and from first-year university and college, plus dropouts and homeless teenagers who live on the streets of major cities.

The need for education among the young is vital, said Dr Alastair Clayton, director general of the Federal Centre for AIDS, because young people have, so far, almost completely avoided the disease.

To date, 2,181 cases of AIDS in Canada have been reported to the federal centre, Dr Clayton said. That compares with approximately 80,000 in the United States and 129,000 in the 142 countries around the world that have found the virus present among their population.

In Canada, there have been only seven cases reported among people from 15 to 19 years of age. There have been approximately 440 among those aged 20 to 29.

"That only talks about cases. It does not talk about the number of children or youth who have been infected," Dr Clayton said, adding that the federal centre estimates there may be 50,000 to 60,000 Canadians carrying the HIV virus that can lead to AIDS.

"We have a chance to do something about it before it spreads into that section of society. That's why I think it's very important to change attitudes now," he said.

The study makes four recommendations:

1. Young people must be given enough information about the probability of contracting AIDS that they will regard the threat "as substantial and very real."

2. Education about AIDS must involve meetings people who have the disease to help youth see how AIDS can affect them. "Young people don't know anyone with AIDS. It's too far distanced from their experience," said Dr King. "Somehow a better understanding of what it's like to have AIDS must be brought closer to their lives."

3. Discussion should be encouraged on alternative forms of sexual expression that do not involve risk of contracting AIDS.

"What we are suggesting they do is anticipate and plan their sexual encounters. It will be a difficult challenge to win them over to the concept of planned, responsible sexual behaviors," the study said.

"The girl was there, the boy was there, but the condom wasn't. That could be the subtitle of the study," Dr King said.

—Education programs must encourage young people "to discuss responsible sexual activity in an open manner."

Intensive education is required, the authors of the study state, because it is totally unrealistic to believe that prevention can be encouraged among teen-agers by promoting abstinence.

Among the first-year university and college students and dropouts surveyed, 15 per cent reported engaging in anal intercourse at least once. This is considered the most dangerous sexual activity in terms of contracting the HIV infection.

"The proportion of adolescents who engage in sexual activity through which HIV can be transmitted is high enough to warrant concern," the study said. "Also a large proportion of these young adults had sexual intercourse with many partners, usually without the protection of condoms."

The survey also found that street children had a better knowledge of AIDS and its risks than other adolescents and that some incorporated safer-sex practices into their life styles.

But, Dr King said, the study's authors recommend that high-risk street children be provided with free condoms and needles to reduce the risk of AIDS transmission.

"We feel very comfortable with the recommendations of the report," said Maureen Law, deputy minister of Health and Welfare Canada. "They're very much in line with our own thinking."

Health and Welfare Canada will finance pilot projects involving the distribution of needles and condoms, she said.

Prostitute Sentencing

54200011 Toronto THE SUNDAY STAR in English
13 Nov 85 p A22

[Text] The Criminal Code should be amended to allow prison sentences of up to five years for prostitutes who solicit business knowing they carry the deadly AIDS virus, a Quebec court judge says.

Judge Louis Carrier imposed the maximum six-month sentence for soliciting for the purpose of prostitution when faced with such a case on November 2. The crown had been unable to lay a charge of criminal negligence, which carries a maximum 10-year sentence, because there was no victim.

The case left him feeling "a bit powerless" to protect society, Carrier said in an interview, because there is no law to deal with working prostitutes who know they carry the virus for acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

"There's a vacuum," he said, adding that the law should be brought up to date.

Carrier said he would like to see a maximum five-year sentence for the offence.

The case of Guylaine Labrecque, 25, who admitted in a written statement to police that she has known for the past 15 months that she carries the AIDS virus, made headlines in Quebec when she was arrested last month.

In sentencing the woman, Carrier called Labrecque a "loaded gun" who showed an "almost deadly irresponsibility."

He put her on three year probation, during which time Labrecque must not frequent Quebec city's downtown district.

There is no cure for AIDS, which is transmitted through the exchange of body fluids, usually in sexual contact or the sharing of needles by intravenous drug users. An AIDS carrier may not show symptoms of the disease.

Ontario Funding of Projects

54200011 Toronto THE TORONTO STAR in English
15 Nov 88 p A13

[Article by Matt Maychak]

[Excerpt] The province will provide almost \$520,000 for 10 new AIDS programs organized by community groups, says Health Minister Elinor Caplan.

The grants will include more than \$75,000 for the Toronto People with AIDS Foundation, she told the Legislature yesterday.

The group provides AIDS victims with financial help, social and recreational activity and social assistance information.

Other programs receiving funding include:

- AIDS committees in Toronto, Sudbury, Cambridge and Guelph.
- An education program for Toronto's Chinese and Portuguese communities, provided by St. Stephen's Community House.
- A plan to train staff of health and social service agencies how to prevent infection among their clients who inject drugs, provided by the Toronto Injection Drug Use Network.
- Education and counselling programs for prostitutes in Ottawa and Toronto.

Caplan claimed the government's AIDS public education campaign is providing most Ontarians with the information they need about the disease.

"Some groups, however, have special needs and community based organizations know best how to reach them," she said. [passage omitted]

Incidence of Chlamydia Reported Rising
5420013 Windsor THE WINDSOR STAR in English
4 Nov 88 p D9

[Article by Robin Ludlow: "'Silent Epidemic' Sterilizing Women"]

[Excerpts] Ottawa—It's called the silent epidemic.

It's quietly stalking tens of thousands of Canadians, mostly young women, usually without their knowledge.

The culprit is chlamydia—the most common and perhaps most underrated sexually transmitted disease.

It's twice as prevalent as gonorrhea, far outdistancing AIDS, herpes and syphilis. [passage omitted]

Apart from genito-urinary infection, chronic pelvic pain and the tubal scarring which causes sterility, chlamydia is a major cause of ectopic pregnancy—where the fertilized egg lodges somewhere other than the uterus. [passage omitted] The ectopic pregnancy rate has doubled since 1971, to about one in 75 pregnancies now, and chlamydia is the prime suspect.

[Passage omitted] New figures from the Laboratory Centre for Disease Control, which are thought to represent only the tip of the iceberg, show a disturbingly high and growing incidence among young women.

Up until last year, the LCDC received chlamydia reports from only 27 labs. They reported 9,661 new cases in 1986.

In 1987, another 34 labs were added to the reporting system. The 61 labs turned up 21,409 new cases—a 221-per-cent increase over 1986. Almost two-thirds of those, or 14,000, were concentrated in the 15-24 age group.

Protein Engineering Research Center Opened in Ottawa
5420012 Ottawa THE OTTAWA CITIZEN in English
10 Nov 88 p A3

[Article by Anne McIlroy]

[Text] A \$7.7-million research centre in biology's newest frontier of protein engineering opened Wednesday at the National Research Council on Montreal Road.

Protein engineering goes a step beyond genetic engineering, improving everything from pesticides to drugs that break down blood clots.

More than forty scientists will work at the new centre, an addition to an existing building. They will collaborate with colleagues at centres in Montreal and Saskatoon, and at universities across the country.

Using \$2 million in equipment, they aim to design new proteins, said Paul Carey, one of the managers at the centre.

Researchers would change the structure at one part of the molecule, test the result of their tinkering, then alter it at one spot and test it again.

"Our main objective is to develop new proteins with improved properties. For example, one major research program will deal with the design of new and improved insecticides and herbicides," says Carey.

The centre has equipment that beams lasers and X-rays at proteins, and computers that take the data, analyse it, and draws a diagram showing the scientist exactly what it looks like.

The centre also has the facilities to grow protein crystals essential for scientific analysis.

The scientists say the possibilities are endless, both in industrial and medical applications.

Inside our bodies, proteins are crucial. They make up the struts and beams that make up the structure of every cell. Enzymes are proteins that control the chemistry of the human body.

The human immune system is made up of proteins. In genetic diseases, proteins produced by a defective gene cause the symptoms.

Workers Want Redress for Work-Related Disease
5420018 Ottawa THE OTTAWA CITIZEN
28 Nov 88 p A10

[Text] Workers from Mc Donnell Douglas Canada protested outside the Workers Compensation Board Saturday.

They claim at least 345 employees have permanent brain damage or lung disease caused by exposure to high levels of aluminum and asbestos.

The 50 demonstrators complained that neither the company nor the government has helped them.

Workers say the Canadian subsidiary of McDonnell Douglas, which builds aluminum jetliner parts, has refused to meet standards for exposure to aluminum dust. They want money and detoxification treatment.

"The (board) says I'm still able to work but I have problems breathing and I have to take medication four times a day," said Norm Smyth, 60, a Brampton aluminum cutter who was forced to sell his home after lung problems put him out of work a year ago.

Peter Finn, 55, an assembler from Brampton, has been off since April.

"I get severe headaches and I lose my memory," he said.

The United Auto Workers union says it arranged a health assessment of 1,200 of the plant's 3 300 workers over a period of about eight months. Of those tested by the Workers' Health Centre, 345 had high levels of aluminum and asbestos in their blood and urine.

Thirty of 68 de Havilland Aircraft workers tested also had dangerously high levels of aluminum in their bodies.

The workers say Labor Minister Greg Sorbara has refused to help because he is unsure the aluminum and asbestos poisoning is from their workplace. Sorbara could not be reached for comment.

Aluminum exposure is measured in nanomols per litre of blood. Experts at the University of Western Ontario say the maximum normal level is 371 nanomols per litre, while 7,400 is associated with brain death.

The compensation board accepts 7,400 as the level at which workers should be compensated, says Nick DeCarlo, president of UAW Local 1967.

Dr Elizabeth Kaegi, a vice-president at the compensation board, said the board is looking into the situation.

Fiberglass Particles Blamed for Edmonton Depot Illness

54200014 Ottawa THE OTTAWA CITIZEN in English
2 Nov 88 p D14

[Text] Dry, dusty air containing fiberglass particles stirred up when the heating system was activated, is being blamed for a mysterious illness which hit more than 100 workers at an Edmonton military warehouse.

Robert O'Brien, depot commander at Canadian Forces Base Edmonton, told reporters there were extensive tests done in the depot by base medical personnel, the Canadian government and University of Alberta researchers, after a succession of workers came down with sore throats, skin rashes and itchiness.

The sprawling supply depot was too dusty. Tests taken from the dust found it contained a tiny amount of fiberglass particles left behind by roof repairs several months ago, O'Brien said.

He did not know how much fiberglass was in the air, but said he believed the amounts were not enough to be considered dangerous.

"There is not very much of it but it doesn't take very much of it to start irritating," he said.

There will be further investigation into why the fiberglass was present in the air, O'Brien said.

He said workers have always been concerned about health risks in the warehouse and a health education program will be set up for employees.

Everyone will be questioned by nurses brought in from across the Prairies and asked to get a complete physical from their doctors, he said. That data will be used in one year when tests will be done again to ensure healthy working conditions.

"The objective is to return my personnel to a healthy work environment and one that they perceive to be healthy," O'Brien said.

A system designed to humidify the 7 1/2-hectare building has not worked for years. Dry air was also considered a factor in the mystery ailment.

The strange symptoms were first noticed in late September, but reached epidemic proportion last week when more than 100 of the 255 military and civilian employees complained of itchiness, rashes, fatigue, sore throats and headaches.

West Coast Butter Clams Confirmed as Cause of Illness

54200015 Vancouver THE SUN in English
2 Nov 88 p A14

[Text] The federal fisheries department has confirmed four people suffered paralytic shellfish poisoning after eating butter clams harvested in the Prince Rupert area.

Fisheries shellfish inspection coordinator Rudy Chiang said Tuesday the clams came from two areas: Canoe Pass, near Port Simpson, and Eddie Pass, located between Porcher Island and Prescott Pass, south of Prince Rupert.

Chiang said the toxicity levels ranged from 1,300 to 1,500 micrograms of toxin per 100 grams of meat in the Canoe Pass area, to 1,700 micrograms of toxin per 100 grams of meat in the Eddie Pass area.

Chiang said the four people involved, who consumed the clams a week ago, have all since been released from hospital.

The entire north coast of B.C., from Cape Caution to the Canadian-Alaskan border, is closed to the harvesting of all clams, mussels, oysters and scallops.

New Reagents for AIDS Diagnosis Discussed
54004802p Beijing RENMIN RIBAO [OVERSEAS
EDITION] in Chinese 22 Nov 88 p 3

[Summary] Test reagents to help diagnose AIDS virus have been developed by medical researchers at AIDS Research and Inspection Center under the Chinese Academy of Preventive Medical Sciences, according to Zeng Yi, head of the center. Shortly after successful isolation of the AIDS virus, the center developed the first immuno-fluorescent test reagent from the virus for seriological diagnosis of the disease, any antibodies that have developed in the blood of a person exposed to the virus become surrounded by a glowing fluorescent light. The center then succeeded in producing a gene engineered AIDS virus antigen by gene recombination techniques. The antigen was purified by electrophoresis to be suitable for using as a specific reagent of the albumin spot method. Clinical work on hundreds of thousands of blood samples, including 8 specimens that were diagnosed by other test methods as carriers, showed that the new Chinese-made test reagents are highly reliable, highly sensitive and are also reproducible.

Increase in Venereal Diseases Feared
54400031 Hong Kong SOUTH CHINA MORNING
POST in English 18 Nov 88 p 13

[Article by Wang Keyu]

[Text] A seven-year-old Beijing girl was diagnosed as a venereal disease carrier in hospital this summer. Doctors later found the girl was infected by her mother who knew nothing about the disease.

Venereal disease has been returning to China in recent years with more and more people falling under its threat.

To meet the worsening situation, Beijing opened its first clinic specialising in treating venereal diseases in mid-October—the Western District Venereal Disease Prevention and Treatment Centre.

According to Dr Liu Daping, 40, who works at the clinic, 82 Beijing residents—most in their 20s and 30s—were diagnosed as having venereal diseases in October.

Mr Liu said gonorrhea and acuminatum condyloma, two of the sexually-contracted diseases, were found most common among the venereal disease carriers at his clinic.

Mr Liu said 80 per cent of the patients were totally cured after one or two weeks of treatment. Many present false identification because they fear their illness may be disclosed to the public.

Venereal disease historically has been the object of public scorn and social discrimination—the situation in China is no exception.

"Many of the victims are pedlars [as published] and private owners. They are poorly educated and not serious about their sexual life," Mr Liu said.

A sample survey in 21 provinces and municipalities revealed that the country's venereal disease patients were increasing by 200 per cent annually. The situation was worst in coastal areas, open cities and special economic zones.

China declared at the United Nations in 1964 that venereal disease had been eradicated from the mainland.

When asked about why venereal disease could be prevalent again in China, Mr Liu said that with China opening to the outside world, some young people are influenced by the West's "sexual liberation" and take unhealthy attitudes about sexual psychology and morals.

On the other hand, public ignorance of the disease and inherited social prejudice against its victims are also the causes for the disease being spread. Some victims try to conceal their affliction, thus exposing others to the possibility of catching the disease, Mr Liu said.

To increase popular knowledge about the disease and about sex education in general, the clinic also held an exhibition of pictures and videos focusing on the symptoms, means of infection and harm caused by the disease.

"It is necessary to have such exhibitions since we know too little about these things," said a post-graduate student from Beijing Foreign Studies University after she visited the exhibition.

Snail Fever Spreads in South China Areas
54004803f Beijing XINHUA in English
0904 GMT 3 Dec 88

[Text] Beijing, 3 Dec (XINHUA)—The incidence of snail fever is growing in 163 counties and cities of 12 South China provinces and autonomous regions and about one million people now suffer from the disease, the overseas edition of PEOPLE'S DAILY reported today.

According to a seminar on research into snail fever held in Wuhan, capital of Central China's Hubei Province, the most seriously affected areas are in Hubei, Jiangxi, Anhui and Jiangsu Provinces.

The breeding ground for oncomelania, a freshwater snail that is the intermediate host of the blood disease, has now expanded to cover 3.38 billion square meters of the affected regions.

The disease-bearing snails inhabit the banks of the Yangtze and Hanshui Rivers and areas adjacent to Poyang and Dongting Lakes, as well as in the swampy regions of Anhui Province, where affected areas have increased by about 600 million square meters since the late 1970's.

The disease is also prevalent in the mountain areas of Sichuan, Yunnan and Zhejiang Provinces as well as the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and can even be frequently found in Guangdong and Fujian Provinces and the metropolis of Shanghai—where it was believed to have been virtually eradicated.

The disease, caused by a blood parasite, results in fever, rashes, distended stomach, and enlarged liver. In severe cases it is fatal.

The major causes of the resurgence of the disease lie in lax control by local governments and an overall drop in prevention funding, experts said.

Medical department officials are taking what measures they can to control the dread disease, the seminar was told.

HONG KONG

Doctors Warn of Impending AIDS Case Boom

54400029 Hong Kong *SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST* in English 25 Nov 88 pp 1, 3

[Article: "Warning on Rise in AIDS Carriers"]

[Text] There could be between 40,000 to 50,000 AIDS carriers in Hongkong within the next five years unless firm public action is taken to encourage people to behave more responsibly, a Government consultant said yesterday.

The warning came as Government doctors revealed two new confirmed AIDS cases—one of them a haemophiliac.

There are a total of 53 haemophiliacs in Hongkong who have been found to be AIDS carriers but yesterday's was the first announcement that a haemophiliac had developed the full-blown Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

The new cases bring the total number of AIDS patients in Hongkong to 15, of whom 11 have already died.

All four surviving AIDS patients are being treated with the anti-AIDS drug, AZT, which prolongs survival but cannot cure the disease.

Another 113 people have been found to be AIDS carriers but none has shown signs of full-blown AIDS, that kills by destroying the body's ability to fight off disease.

Dr Yeoh Eng-kiong, chairman of the Government's AIDS scientific working group, said the disease presented a "real" problem in Hongkong and there was no reason for people to be complacent.

Based on the present number of cases, there were likely to be between 300 and 400 patients suffering from the disease in the next five years and a further 40,000 to 50,000 AIDS carriers, he said.

Plans Set for Biggest Ever AIDS Education Campaign

54400034 Hong Kong *HONG KONG STANDARD* in English 17 Nov 88 p 5

[Article: "Plans Set for Biggest-Ever AIDS Drive"]

[Text] The territory's biggest-ever educational campaign against AIDS is to kick off next month.

Dr Lee Shiu-hung, acting director of medical and health services, said yesterday the \$600,000 campaign was aimed at encouraging community involvement in the fight against AIDS.

The Government has produced three new television commercials on the dangers of AIDS, to tie in with the campaign. However, an advisor admitted preaching at people was not enough to contain the deadly virus.

"We provide people with information on AIDS," said Dr Yeoh Eng-kiong, Government consultant on the virus.

"Most people will not change their behaviour just because the Government tells them to use condoms or to have only one sexual partner.

"But if there were more discussion in the community, people would be aware of the importance of the issue and be more willing to change their sexual behaviour," Dr Yeoh said.

He said the number of AIDS patients was still limited, but with an estimated one patient for every 100 virus carriers, community education should no longer be delayed.

The number of carriers detected in Hongkong reached 127 in September. About 60 percent were infected through sexual contact.

Only two of the 13 patients who developed full-blown AIDS are still alive.

The Government's three new advertisements, warning of the need for caution in casual sex, are to begin broadcasting next month.

Dr Patrick Li, head of the AIDS Counselling and Health Education Clinic, said the adverts would be aimed at three groups: youths, homosexuals and heterosexuals who engage in occasional casual sex.

"We hope that through the 30-second commercials, people—including homosexuals—will be alert that having casual sex even once can be very risky," Dr Li said.

The decision to include youths in the target group stemmed from the findings of a Family Planning Association report last November. The figures showed about 22 percent of young men had engaged in sex with prostitutes by age 26.

Community AIDS Concern Week, to start December 1, is timed to coincide with the first World AIDS Day organised by the World Health Organisation.

In addition to an exhibition at the Central headquarters of the Hongkong Bank from December 1 to 11, plans include a youth concert, an inter-school debating competition, and seminars for doctors, nurses, business corporations, social workers and other people who come in contact with potential AIDS carriers.

Japanese singer Hideki Saito and Olympic vaulting champion Lou Yun are scheduled to perform at a December 4 concert before an expected crowd of 15,000 at Sha Tin Racecourse.

The concert is to be broadcast live on TV.

Businesses, Schools To Take Part in AIDS Concern Week

54400030 Hong Kong *SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST* in English 17 Nov 88 p 3

[Text] Businesses, schools, social workers and health care professionals will take part in Community AIDS Concern Week next month in an effort to encourage social tolerance for AIDS carriers and patients.

Health authorities yesterday urged that a "positive, sympathetic and supportive attitude" be fostered towards AIDS.

December 1 has been designated as World AIDS Day by the World Health Organisation, which has requested member countries to undertake a community education campaign on the disease to remove public prejudice against sufferers.

The virus has already infected 127 people in Hongkong; 13 have developed the full-blown syndrome which has killed 11 of them.

The week will have various seminars and there will be an exhibition at the Hongkong Bank's headquarters in Central.

Late Night TV To Air Documentaries on AIDS Facts

54400032 Hong Kong *HONGKONG STANDARD* in English 18 Nov 88 p 3

[Text] A package of programmes designed to increase knowledge on the killer disease AIDS will be shown on late night television beginning next week.

Five documentaries will be broadcast on the Jade (Chinese) channel at 11:50 pm, starting from Thursday.

They have been given a late time slot because their sensitive nature, according to Mr Li Wingon, press relations manager of the Television Broadcasts Limited.

He said some adult viewers might find it uncomfortable watching such a disturbing project with their children.

There was also a programming problem of fitting the series in with the regular weekday schedule, Mr Li added.

The content of the programmes includes a real-life story on the last three months of an AIDS patient; a report on the different attitudes adopted by the governments of

three countries towards the disease; a forum on the legal, moral and ethical controversies surrounding the issue; and new facts about the disease.

Four of the documentaries were produced in Britain and Australia. The other is a local production.

"We hope to help create an atmosphere for the general public to have more discussion on AIDS," Mr Li said.

The broadcasting of the documentaries is to support the Government's Community AIDS Concern Week, due to begin on December 1.

The World Health Organisation's World AIDS Day will be held during the same week.

Large-Scale Exhibit Opens AIDS Week

54400037 Hong Kong *SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST* in English 1 Dec 88 p 6

[Article by Mary Ann Benitez]

[Text] Hongkong joins some 100 countries in World AIDS Day today, a global effort to prevent the further spread of the modern-day plague that has already affected more than 124,000 people worldwide.

The local AIDS awareness week will be kicked off at a large-scale exhibition at the Hongkong Bank plaza in Central this afternoon.

But although the Government has embarked on a massive publicity drive on AIDS prevention, public response in seeking medical counselling and testing has not been satisfactory.

The chairman of the Government AIDS Scientific Working Group, Dr Yeoh Eng-kiong, said yesterday: "I think people are still afraid, they are still worried about confidentiality (of test results)."

Dr Yeoh pointed out that to prevent any leakage of information, the Government did not keep records of names of infected carriers nor AIDS patients.

The AIDS problem has been complicated by its early association with homosexuality, which is illegal in Hongkong.

Dr Yeoh said the virus was not spread through homosexuals as such, but through sex involving promiscuous people, male or female, who might be infected by one of their partners.

Most of the 108,794 people screened for the AIDS antibody were tested through social hygiene clinics. Over the past three years, only 1,696 individual were referred from private practitioners and another 6,734 from Government clinics.

A total of 113 persons have tested positive for the AIDS antibody (that is, they are infected but show no signs of the full-blown syndrome), and 15 others have been confirmed as AIDS cases.

Up to 50 per cent of those infected with the AIDS virus—estimated at between five million to 10 million people globally—will develop the full-blown Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome within 10 years.

Dr Yeoh said he hoped the week of activities would be the "starting point" to get some community involvement and action on the incurable disease.

Organisers hope to stimulate people into discussing the issues and problems associated with AIDS.

Several issues which need to be tackled include the legal rights of infected persons and AIDS patients, the stigma attached to high-risk groups such as homosexuals and haemophiliacs, and the socio-economic problems of an increasing number of infected people in the workplace.

An international poster competition has also been organised by the Red Cross to raise awareness among children.

Dr Yeoh warned earlier that some 40,000 to 50,000 people could be infected in the territory in five years if there was no firm commitment from society to adopt more responsible behaviour.

"We hope our efforts would stop that from occurring. We don't want 40,000 or 50,000 carriers," he said, noting that Government resources would be unable to cope with a large number of infected persons.

"From the existing carriers of the AIDS virus, even if one of them spreads it to one person every year, just simple arithmetic will tell you that in five years, you can have 40,000 to 50,000 people infected," he warned.

But the disease could spread even more quickly if other sources of infections were taken into account, he said, introducing the Community AIDS Concern Week to begin on December 1, designated by the World Health Organisation as World AIDS Day.

Dr Yeoh said a major obstacle in AIDS prevention was that many people who engaged in high-risk behaviour refused to recognise that they could be infected with the virus.

One sexual encounter with an infected person will result in a 10 per cent chance of getting infected. Youngsters who abuse heroin can resort to sharing needles, another potential source of infection.

Dr Yeoh also did not think that mandatory screening for AIDS antibody or isolating infected individuals would work for Hongkong.

"In time, they are going to cause a lot of problems in terms of questions of individual rights and other issues," he said.

Dr Yeoh said the stricken haemophiliac had been infected with the virus some time ago but he refused to reveal his age in order to protect his identity.

There are only about 150 haemophiliacs in Hongkong, 53 of whom have been found to be positive to the AIDS antibody since screening for high-risk groups began in 1985.

Of those infected, 18 are children and young adults under the age of 17.

Many of the haemophiliac-carriers were infected by contaminated blood factor imported from the United States before safety measures were instituted five years ago.

Doctors were at pains to stress yesterday that the existing blood factory supply for haemophiliacs is safe from AIDS-virus contamination.

The head of the AIDS Counselling and Education Service, Dr Patrick Li, said the blood factory supply was donor-screened and heat-treated by manufacturers in the United States.

"There's no risk at all of contamination with the existing supply since 1985," he said.

TV Sex Education Programs To Inform Parents on AIDS

54400035 Hong Kong HONGKONG STANDARD in English 2 Dec 88 p 2

[Article by Denise Wong]

[Text] The Family Planning Association will run more sex education programmes for parents next year, with considerable focus on AIDS.

It would help parents bear the responsibility of teaching youngsters proper sex attitudes, which would be the most effective way to prevent AIDS, said Mr Cheuk Wing-chuen, education officer of the association.

Speaking after a seminar on "AIDS and the new generation", Mr Cheuk yesterday said his association would hold sex education forums for parents at its three centres next year.

It would also produce TV programmes of 20 to 30 episodes on sex education for parents, each of about seven minutes, which would be broadcast during women's viewing hours starting next month, he said.

Mr Cheuk said preventing AIDS from spreading could not depend merely on mass media propaganda.

"People may have a better understanding of AIDS through various kinds of propaganda. But if there is no individual education they may not change their sexual behaviour and attitudes correspondingly. Most believe they themselves will never catch AIDS," he said.

For educating new generations, Mr Cheuk said teachers and parents should play equally significant roles.

He said many teachers told him there was no need to include the topic of AIDS in school sex education.

Some believed their students would not indulge in casual sex, or were too young to have sex interests. Others said they did not have enough knowledge to answer the students' queries.

And many said the topic was too sensitive and controversial to be discussed in classrooms, as it would inevitably lead to embarrassing issues such as homosexuality, casual sex and contraceptive methods, said Mr Cheuk.

He said many parents also held such views which made them reluctant to talk to their children about sex.

Chinese University Says Herbs May Lead Fight on AIDS

54400033 Hong Kong HONG KONG STANDARD in English 25 Nov 88 p 3

[Text] The Chinese University has found 11 kinds of Chinese herbs which it claims slows the AIDS virus in human cells.

Under a joint scheme with an American institute, the university's Chinese medicine material research centre screened 27 Chinese herbs through in vitro experiments on AIDS-infected cells last year.

The centre's director, Professor Yeung Hin-wing, said yesterday that, with further study, the herbs could fill the vacuum in drugs available for the treatment of AIDS.

Prof Yeung said the herbs strengthened the body's immune system—an aspect usually neglected by Western medicine.

In addition, Chinese herbal medicine usually had few side effects, he said.

AIDS patients using AZT, or azidothymidine, the only drug approved in the U.S. for AIDS treatment, have found in some follow-up tests there was no recovery of the immune system.

In 1985, AZT was proved capable of preventing reproduction of the AIDS virus in cells.

In Hongkong, the two surviving AIDS patients receive AZT treatment and are stable.

Prof Yeung said the relatively few AIDS patients in Hongkong had made clinical experiments on the effect of Chinese herbs difficult. But they had been proved by U.S. tests.

He refused to disclose the 11 herbs, as the study was still immature.

Since the finish of experiments last year, Prof Yeung said his centre had acted as a back-up for research by the Davies School of the University of California, under Professor Robert Chang.

Children of Boat People Suffering From Diseases

54400036 Hong Kong SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST in English 2 Dec 88 p 1

[Article by Simon Macklin]

[Text] Security Branch officials yesterday called an emergency meeting because of the deteriorating health of Vietnamese boat people being held in the San Yick factory building in Tuen Mun.

Relief agency workers say almost all of the 1,000 children in the building are suffering from skin disease and a chickenpox epidemic has affected even new-born babies.

The office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has filed a report to Government officials expressing grave concern for the health of the boat people in San Yick.

Relief agency workers together with Government doctors are to convene a special meeting early next week to try to find ways of improving the health of the inmates and arresting the epidemic of chickenpox.

Normally, a child with chickenpox must be isolated from other children for a week after the first appearance of the rash—an impossibility in the cramped conditions of the closed centre.

The only treatment is to prevent a child from scratching the spots—otherwise pock marks may remain—and applying calamine lotion or dusting powder to relieve itching.

A project officer with the Oxfam relief agency, Miss Hazel Wong Chor-fong, said she saw a child who had contracted chickenpox when she was only two or three days old.

The baby had been treated at a Government hospital for three weeks but her mother was able to visit her only once during that time.

Miss Wong said the health of the children appeared to be deteriorating as the weather became cooler.

"They get very little sunlight and fresh air. Most of them have been there for five months and have had very little opportunity to go outside. They are listless and their spirits seem to be broken.

"Judging by the faces of the children and adults, they seem to be really sick," she said.

Miss Wong said while relief agencies were especially concerned about the children, nearly all the adults were also showing signs of sickness.

"Many of the children have three or four communicable diseases. Their condition is very bad because of the environment and they are just not recovering when they get ill," Miss Wong said.

The drains in the building were frequently blocked, and visitors and workers say they often find pools of water on most of the floors.

Steps were taken yesterday to further relax restrictions in San Yick in order to allow the refugees more fresh air.

Government doctors have been told to hold an "urgent" investigation and come up with proposals to improve the health of the nearly 3,000 refugees.

The charge de mission for the Hongkong office of the UNHCR, Mr Faziul Karim, said his staff had carried out a careful investigation of health conditions among the refugees in San Yick and decided the present situation was "untenable".

"Our conclusions basically is that this is not a situation which should be allowed to continue. People will have to be moved out quickly and immediately," he said.

The deterioration of the refugees' health was "quite serious", Mr Karim said.

"People do not have any access to sunlight and fresh air and it is having a serious adverse effect on their health," he said.

The Government's refugee co-ordinator, Mr Michael Hanson, said the administration was committed to improving conditions inside the building to try to stamp out disease among the refugees.

He acknowledged having received a report from the UNHCR which expressed concern for the health and welfare of the refugees in San Yick and said he had started an investigation as "a matter of urgency".

"If what the report has to say is true, then it would be a source of serious concern," Mr Hanson said.

He refused to comment further on the state of health of the refugees in San Yick but admitted there was an epidemic of chickenpox among the children.

"The Government has accepted that the environment at San Yick is unsuitable for housing refugees and we have implemented a lot of ideas over the last few months in order to try and improve things," Mr Hanson said.

Steps were taken yesterday to increase the number of weekly trips that each of the refugees was able to take beyond the walls of the camp but it is understood most of the refugees are still limited to one or two visits of a few hours each week.

In October some 800 of the refugees at the centre refused to move into the new Pillar Point open camp near Butterfly Beach under a plan intended to result in the closure of San Yick.

But agency workers say this was because some of the refugees selected to move out of the centre would have to be separated from other family members.

A small group of South Vietnamese had also refused to move from San Yick to Pillar Point because they would have been heavily outnumbered in the new camp by refugees from the north of Vietnam.

The Government signed an agreement with the UNHCR in September whereby they would move all the Vietnamese out of San Yick before the end of the year. But officials say it is now unlikely that all of them will vacate the building until next March.

Officials say they decided the conditions in the building would be considered "tolerable" as long as the refugees have ample opportunity to leave the building.

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LAOS

Malaria Incidence Up in Champassak *54004301c Vientiane PASASON in Lao 6 Aug 88 p 1*

[Article: "Champassak Province Malaria Institute Cadres Suppress Malaria"]

[Text] A report by the Malaria Suppression Institute in Champassak indicated that, after studying malaria incidence in 37 villages in the Pakse District municipal area, they found an increase of 16.6 percent over last year.

In responding to this problem, the Malaria Suppression Institute has sent cadres to work with the administrative committee in order to suppress malaria by disseminating health education, and by leading the people in cleaning out ditches. This task has been carried out extensively in 10 districts in the province.

Dengue Outbreak Blamed on Poor Vaccination
54004301b Vientiane VIENTIANE MAI in Lao
25 Aug 88 pp 1,4

[Article: "Dengue Outbreak in Sikottabong District"]

[Text] On Tuesday the agriculture, forestry, irrigation and agricultural co-ops section in Sikottabong District told reporters from VIENTIANE MAI that starting from last weekend there has been a serious dengue outbreak in Thong Pong Village. Currently three buffalo are dead and a number of animals have been sick. The district agriculture section also indicated that the dengue outbreak occurred because the people in this area have taken pasteurization vaccination for cattle and buffalo too lightly. However, this section has already sent several technicians from the domestic and veterinarian section to work with the administrative committee in each village for pasteurization vaccination of the people's infected animals.

Several technical cadres from the domestic animal and veterinarian section have been working with the district administrative committee in Hatsaifong District on pasteurization vaccination of infected animals.

Recently there has also been news that a number of technical cadres have gone to vaccinate for disease prevention in animals of the people in Saithani and Saisettha districts, especially in the areas of Nason Canton, Don Sangpai, and Ban Sang Na Khamthoung, involving a total of 279 buffalo and 99 cattle, and 54 buffalo and 33 cattle were vaccinated in Ban Doungkang Canton and Ban Doung Yai and Ban Nabian villages in Saisettha District.

Animal Disease Epidemics Reported
54004301d Vientiane PASASON in Lao 17 Sep 88 p 2

[Excerpt] [Passage omitted] Comrade Bounkwang Souvannaphan, a veterinary technician, reported that from January to 12 September this year over 5,000 cattle and buffalo have died from pasteurization and anthrax, and over 4,000 pigs have died of cholera nationwide. The conclusion was that this was a very high death rate for animals, having a very important effect on the farming family economy as well as the national economy, amounting to many millions of kip in comparison with the selling price for the animals. This has also decreased draft animal labor for our people.

The reason for the animal deaths is that for a majority of our people animals are still being raised the natural way and the veterinarian network has not yet been expanded throughout. Thus far it has been expanded only 60 percent in certain feasible localities. As a result, there has not yet been full-scale vaccination for the prevention of animal diseases. It can be carried out in some places, but it is not possible in others. The lowest vaccination rate is only 25 percent.

Also, some veterinary cadres in certain localities have not given attention to their own specialized task, thus causing the people to lose faith in them. Administrative committees as well as the people in some localities continue to take lightly the task of having their animals vaccinated for disease prevention, and have been unwilling to cooperate with veterinary cadres during vaccination times. What is even worse is when the people in some localities eat the animal meat when the animals die, or else sell the meat in the market. As a result, the disease spreads rapidly into other localities.

The animal disease epidemic has now eased in different localities, but the situation has not yet returned to normal. In order to avoid carelessness in this matter, the veterinarians in each locality should increase their responsibility for their own tasks, especially with regard to vaccination for animal disease prevention. In addition, the people and also the administrative committee in each locality should become a driving force in cooperating with the authorities involved by taking their animals to have them vaccinated early.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

TB Responsible for 300 Deaths Yearly
54004305 Port Moresby POST-COURIER in English
15 Dec 88 p 27

[Excerpt] Tuberculosis (TB) is still an important cause of sickness and death in PNG.

Around 300 persons are reported to die of TB every year in PNG.

And, with AIDS now in PNG, it can become worse because the virus (germ) of AIDS makes it hard for the bones to fight TB. [passage omitted]

PHILIPPINES

Disease Ravages Zambales Province Rice Crop
54004307 Manila THE MANILA CHRONICLE in English
6 Dec 88 p 14

[Article by Rodel Felix]

[Text] A disease plaguing the paddy or palay crops of Zambales province will mean heavy losses for palay farmers unless resistant varieties are substituted soon, an agriculture department official said.

Isagani Herrera, general manager of the Zambales Regional Integrated Agricultural Research Systems (Riars), told participants of the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) conference that palay farmers are apprehensive over the spread of a rice crop disease identified as "putot." The disease causes the formation of sterile flowers in the upper portion of the panicle of the palay stalks, stunting the growth of the crop.

The Riars in Zambales, Herrera said has already formed a task force that would determine the extent of the damage on the crops and will recommend alternative measures for farmers to recover from their losses. Herrera said that unofficial estimates place damages in the millions.

The disease has spread to the towns of Malanlan, Iba, Bangkal and Malabon affecting about 500 hectares of palay fields.

The exact causes of the disease are not yet known but Herrera said that the townspeople suspect that the toxic chemicals such as bromide and boron coming from the discharge of mine tailings could be the culprits.

Herrera refused to name the mining firms operating in the area except to say that local chromite mining company is located near the areas where the "putot" disease have spread.

Riars have sent soil and palay samples to the International Rice Research Institute (Irri) for studying and the results are expected to be finished before the end of the year, Herrera said.

Herrera said the disease, which remained unknown for years, first hit the province some 10 years ago. It is only this year that the disease has been identified, and yet, there is still no known cure for the disease plaguing the palay fields of Zambales.

Agriculture technicians said that it was difficult to identify the disease because its symptoms were unlike common rice diseases such as "tungro" and stem borer infestation.

As an immediate relief for farmers, Riars will soon recommend varieties which can withstand such harsh

conditions as brought about by the change in the quality of soil after it has been exposed to the mine tailings.

VIETNAM

Agriculture Ministry Holds Insect Control Conference

BK2212132388 Hanoi Domestic Service in Vietnamese
2300 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] The Department of Vegetation Protection of the Agricultural and Food Industry Ministry recently held a conference to review its 1988 performances in protecting vegetation and to discuss measures to control insects in 1989.

The conferees unanimously agreed on insect control measures in 1989. At the provincial level, the organization and operation of vegetation protection squads and the application of insecticides must be coordinated, linking materials to techniques in the districts, in accordance with circular No. 9 of the Agricultural and Food Industry Ministry on the activities of vegetation protection organizations under the new system.

For the immediate future, in the winter-spring crop season, attention must be paid to controlling and eradicating stem borers, brown planthoppers, pest, and blight affecting rice, rust and powdery mildew affecting soybean and peanut, and corn pests.

At present, localities should concentrate on controlling stem borers and blight on 5th-month spring rice seedlings by plowing up the roots of rice stalks and cleaning all of them out of ricefields in order to kill stem borers and prevent them from spreading to the 1989 winter-spring from the 1988 10th-month crop season.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Current State of AIDS in Slovakia Reviewed

54003002d Prague RUDE PRAVO in Czech
2 Nov 88 p 2

[Czechoslovak Press Agency article: "A Serious Problem—AIDS"]

[Text] A total of 3 clinical cases of AIDS has been reported in Slovakia thus far and 15 persons tested serologically positive. It is thought that the actual number of those afflicted is 10 to 100 times higher. The incidence of AIDS continues to develop throughout the world in a very unfavorable way. It is estimated that the number of infected persons who are still without clinical symptoms is from 5 to 10 million.

In view of the fact that currently all blood donors are tested each time they give blood, transmission of the disease through this method is excluded. In the Slovak Socialist Republic, some 300,000 such examinations have been conducted thus far. The serious problem remains the possibility of infection through sexual contact. Despite the fact that for some time now the use of condoms has been stressed as one of the most effective methods of protection against any kind of infection, and thus also AIDS, the use of these devices has not expanded in our country for the time being. Vending machine sales of condoms for other purposes could help in prevention.

Report on Tuberculosis Presented

54003002c Prague LIDOVA DEMOKRACIE in Czech
20 Sep 88 p 5

[Article by Hec: "Is Tuberculosis a Continuing Threat?"]

[Excerpts] [Passage omitted] Although tuberculosis is not such a serious problem today, it continues to exist. The national register makes it possible to computer-evaluate the situation and to uncover even a microepidemic. Last year, 1,220 cases were found, including one-third among people less than 45 years of age. Because inoculation does not result in lifelong immunity, tests in two okreses involve the shifting of the inoculation time from the infant period to the 6th or 10th year of life of a child with the goal of prolonging the protection against the bacterium to a later time period at which the child would be entering a collective. [passage omitted]

Dangerous Rabbit Viral Disease Reported

54003002b Prague RUDE PRAVO in Czech
6 Oct 88 p 2

[Czechoslovak Press Agency article: "Dangerous Viral Disease Strikes Rabbits"]

[Text] Last year and particularly this year, a number of rabbit herds were attacked by a highly dangerous disease—rabbit plague. The disease first showed up last

year in the fall in East Slovakia Kraj. It was first found in the Czech Socialist Republic this year in July in Moravia; it later spread to Central Bohemia, Southern Bohemia, and Eastern Bohemia. Losses in rabbit herds are sizable, occasionally as high as 100 percent.

The incubation period for the plague is a mere 48 to 72 hours. After being infected, the rabbits are listless, reject food, some have a bloody discharge from their nose, and have convulsions. There is no known case where rabbit plague was transmitted to other animals or to man. The infection is spread among rabbits primarily by stinging insects, through food, water, and equipment used in raising rabbits.

Thus far, no effective cure for rabbit plague is known. One hope is a vaccine, developed in the Czech Socialist Republic, which is currently being tested. For the present, veterinarians are therefore recommending that shipments of rabbits be restricted and that they be more effectively protected against insects. Keepers of rabbits are obliged to report suspected infections to veterinary authorities without delay.

Bacterial Infection of Trees, Shrubs Disclosed

54003002a Prague SVOBODNE SLOVO in Czech
21 Oct 88 pp 1, 4

[Text] The windbreak of hawthorns in the vicinity of Ruzyně Airfield was 5 km in length and 10 meters in width. It is no more. Only meager remainders are left. And, in time, it will disappear altogether. I am looking at the site of the fire which spelled the sad end for trees attacked by a scarlatinoid disease. There is no effective treatment at present against this malady, which is caused by the bacterium *Erwinia amylovora*, and the only course is the total destruction of the diseased timber.

We provided detailed information this summer regarding this scarlatinoid infection, which attacks apple trees, pear trees, quince trees, hawthorns, cotoneasters, mountain ashes, hawthorns, and Amelanchier (in 4 months it can destroy a 20-year-old tree). This dangerous disease arrived in our territory most likely on cotoneasters imported from the GDR to be planted around the Prague Palace of Culture and was transmitted from these trees to nearby hawthorns. It is surprising, of course, that the importation of highly susceptible trees was permitted and, moreover, from a country where this disease has been known to exist for a considerable time.

Toward the end of July, positive findings pertaining to the disease were only known with respect to hawthorns. At that time, there were foci of the disease particularly in Prague and in two okreses of Central Bohemia Kraj—Kolin and Kladno. What is the situation 3 months later? We called on the Administration for the Protection of Plants at the Central Agricultural Control and Testing Institute, which is charged with doing research on the incidence of this disease, and we found out that North Bohemia Kraj—the okreses of Chomutov, Louny, and

Teplice, has already been infected as well. Currently, there are a total of 172 foci of the disease in the two krajy and in the city of Prague.

The disease was also discovered to exist in pear trees and apple trees, not only in privately owned orchards, but also in large-scale production stands; in the fruit tree nursery at Mohitorov near Kolin, some 5,500 affected pear trees had to be liquidated. However, additional apple tree seedlings from this nursery are being shipped to other growers within the framework of the Central Bohemia Kraj with the agreement of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of the Czech Socialist Republic, which has issued an amendment dealing with the disease.

This disease was first noted in this country to exist in the hawthorns surrounding the Palace of Culture and is now returning to it. A sad finding from the end of September involves hundreds of contaminated cotoneasters surrounding this palace. They are faced with the same fate as the hawthorns in Ruzyně. Currently, the Administration for the Protection of Plants is negotiating with the technical administration of the Palace of Culture regarding replacement plants. [passage omitted]

We also wanted to know how the cooperation involving the national committees in the fight against this aggressive bacterial disease is going, primarily in the city of Prague, because this summer we had written about the overly protracted declaration of quarantine areas. Now, the situation is improved and the National Committee of the Capital City of Prague is preparing a proclamation (the Kraj National Committee for Central Bohemia Kraj already issued it in August) which will be binding for all district national committees.

Employees of the Administration for the Protection of Plants are making provisions to assure 100-percent control surrounding intensive plantings and it is also their duty to do so in fruit and horticultural nurseries; however, they cannot embark upon the systematic checking of the countryside because there is a shortage of qualified personnel. Consequently, they are organizing lectures for owners and users of gardens, for administrators of public green spaces, etc., in order to expand the base of those people who will be capable of identifying the disease in timber stands. [passage omitted]

INDIA

Council for Medical Research Issues AIDS Report
54500036 Calcutta *THE SUNDAY STATESMAN* in
English 13 Nov 88 p 3

[Article by Sumit Sen]

[Text] The Indian Council for Medical Research, New Delhi in its recent and latest report on Human Immuno Deficiency Virus (HIV) infection in India identified 22 AIDS cases in the country. This startling revelation has been made following a nationwide serosurveillance programme conducted jointly by the ICMR and Union Ministry of Health. Till recently about 120,000 persons from high risk groups have been screened and 370 detected to be seropositive. While 22 of them were AIDS patients, the rest are asymptomatic. The report, based on a survey which started at the end of 1986, was submitted recently.

Initially the emphasis was on screening of prostitutes. By screening a smaller number of these women, it became obvious that HIV infection exists in different parts of the country. By the end of 1986, it was clear that heterosexual promiscuity played a major role in transmission of HIV in India. This apart, seropositive pregnant women and infants have been detected.

Of the 22 AIDS patients detected so far (excluding the recent AIDS case in Calcutta) 15 are Indians and 7 are foreign citizens. Circumstantial evidences suggest that the infection was acquired abroad in 11 out of 15 cases. One Indian acquired the disease following transfusion of the infected blood in India, while the other was the wife of an AIDS patient, who had acquired the infection in a foreign country. Of the 15 Indian AIDS patients, 12 were men and three women. Of the seven foreigners, only one is a woman.

According to the report, the two heterosexually promiscuous seropositive Indian women belonging to Pondicherry and Bombay, have died of the dreaded disease. Despite supportive treatment therapy two foreigners and 14 Indians died in India. The two other foreigners went back to their countries after symptomatic treatment.

An Indian, who had become seropositive following transfusion of blood from a seropositive donor later suffered repeated attacks of opportunistic infections requiring hospitalisation and supportive therapy. The medical centre, which was treating the patient, reported that he had succumbed to the infection after getting discharged from the hospital against medical advice.

An Indian businessman, who was heterosexually promiscuous in a Central African country, after coming back to India had developed fever, repeated opportunistic infections and loss of weight. He is currently under treatment. All the patients, according to the report presented a

history of fever, weight loss and repeated infections. Seven victims had neurological and psychiatric manifestations. One foreigner had extensive "kaposi sarcoma."

Of the seven foreigners, two each were from the USA and Switzerland, and the rest were Spanish, Canadian and Kenyan. The ICMR report identified blood and "factor eight" transfusions in the USA, heterosexual promiscuity in the USA, Africa and India (including prostitutes from Bombay) as some of the probable sources of infections of Indians. These apart, homosexual contacts in West Germany, and blood transfusion in India might have caused the infection.

Following the study it became apparent that prostitutes in many cases run the risk of being seropositive individuals. The report following an early study mentioned that of the 256 Indian seropositive individuals, 95 are prostitutes in red light zones. Among foreigners, most of the seropositive individuals are students.

Majority of the seropositive individuals identified so far are apparently healthy. Experts feel that they are likely to be asymptomatic for variable periods up to 10 years. The experts working in the field underscored the need to provide appropriate education for seropositive individuals so that they can take precautions to prevent the spread of infection to others.

Interestingly, the ICMR experts pointed out that India is one of the first countries to report that some of the symptomatic individuals, who were initially seropositive became seronegative at a later time. The studies are now in progress to detect this surprising change in serological status and its consequences.

The ICMR initiated screening of high risk groups for HIV antibodies in 1985 to find out whether it has spread to India. Serosurveillance among high risk groups at the National Institute of Virology, Pune and at the Centre for Advanced Research in Virology, Christian Medical College, Vellore later led to the detection of 10 seropositive prostitutes in mid-1986. Following this detection, a nationwide surveillance was started.

At present, nearly 40 centres have been set up in different parts of the country for carrying out the surveillance programme. The AIDS task force reviewed the data in May 1988 and recommended that selected institutions in Tamil Nadu may initiate screening of blood donors. A similar programme, according to the ICMR experts, may be undertaken by two or three other centres in metropolitan cities. These are proposed to provide information not only on the prevalence of HIV infection among blood donors in these cities but also the feasibility and operational problems in carrying out such screening. The data will be reviewed after six months following which appropriate measures will be taken.

The ICMR experts warned about the prevalence of HIV infection in many foreign countries from whose students come to study in India. The surveillance centres till the middle of this year screened over 8,000 foreign students. Of them, about 30 seropositive persons have been detected. One of them developed AIDS and died despite treatment.

According to the ICMR experts, one of the major complaints that restrict wider screening for HIV infection, is the cost of equipment and tools like ELISA readers, accessories and kits required for identifying the disease. Recently at the request of the Department of Bio-Technology and the Ministry of Health, an evaluation of nine commercially available immuno-diagnostic kits for HIV antibody detection, has been initiated by the ICMR at its reference centres for AIDS. It is expected that these studies will identify the most sensitive and specific tests suitable for Indian conditions following which Indian organizations can manufacture kits indigenously.

This apart, facilities for isolation of HIV from seropositive individuals and AIDS cases are being created at the reference centres for AIDS. Two such centres—All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi and National Institute of Virology, Pune have been successful in isolating HIV from seropositive individuals.

Rise in Malaria Deaths Due To Resistance of Parasites
54500033 Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
2 Nov 88 p 3

[Text] The resistance power of parasites has increased and this, in turn, has led to a rise in the number of malaria deaths. Mr. Prasanta Sur, West Bengal Minister for Health and Family Welfare, said in a message to the review committee meeting of the "Plasmodium Falciparum Containment Programme" on malaria eradication held at Calcutta on Tuesday.

Mr Sur said that the main problem faced by West Bengal in this regard was "importation of cases with an increasing incidence of malignant malaria." The Minister hoped that the programme would be successful in the districts of Purulia and Bankura where it had been undertaken at present.

Mr Tarun Dutta, State Health Secretary, said that the incidence of malaria was higher in the urban than in the rural areas. He said water congestion in the cities perhaps accounted for this phenomenon. Mr Dutta said that although malaria eradication happens to be the biggest public health programme in the country, it was not yielding commensurate results. He regretted that blood sampling for testing of malaria was behind schedule in West Bengal. The Health Secretary called for a more systematic programme to eradicate this "age-old catastrophe."

Malaria, Kala-azar Maintain Stabborn Hold in Bihar
54500035 Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
27 Oct 88 p 5

[Text] Patna, 26 October (UNI)—Malaria and kala-azar, the two dreaded diseases, have been raging in Bihar, although the twin afflictions have almost been eliminated elsewhere in the country.

Total cases of malaria increased to 36 per cent and that of malignant types by 22 per cent during the first seven months this year as compared to the corresponding period previous year, official sources said.

Total and malignant cases of malaria, however, have declined by 2.2 and 11 per cent respectively in the country till September this year.

The worst affected districts are Ranchi, Singhbhum, Palamu Hazaribagh, Giridih, Dhanbad and Santhal Parganas which contributed 80 per cent of the cases. Besides malaria, Kala-azar has claimed 111 lives from January, 1987 till July this year.

The sources said during the past three years Bihar has reported 78 per cent kala-azar cases in the country. It accounted for 14079, 17471 and 11736 cases in 1986, 1987 and 1988 up to July respectively, as against 17806, 21977 and 13003 cases reported in the country during the corresponding period.

The district worst-affected by kala-azar was Sahibganj, recording 44 per cent of the cases reported during the current year. The resurgence in malaria as well as kala-azar comes despite huge investments under the National Malaria Eradication Programme.

Official sources, however, attributed the rise in the number of people afflicted with the diseases to withdrawal of spray operations following a decline in malaria and kala-azar cases to a negligible level in the Sixties as withdrawal of spray operations had led to sand fly density.

The Union minister of state for health and family welfare, Mr Motilal Vora, visited the state recently with a view to stepping up anti-malaria and anti-kala-azar measures.

Under the National Malaria Eradication Programme, the Centre has provided Rs 5.17 crores for the supply of insecticides and anti-malaria vaccines.

A separate plan at an estimated cost of Rs 2.46 crores has also been finalised to fight kala-azar. Under the plan 15.32 million population is proposed to be covered.

Brain Fever Claims 1,500 Lives in Uttar Pradesh
54500034 Bombay *THE TIMES OF INDIA* in English
21 Oct 88 p 8

[Text] It is one of the worst human tragedies in UP, comparable, perhaps, to the legendary onslaughts of the dreaded bubonic plague of yesteryears. In the last 50 days, over 1,500 persons, mainly children aged between 5 and 13, have perished due to Japanese Encephalitis in the districts of Gorakhpur, Basti, Deoria, Behraich, Ballia and Azamgarh. Unofficially, however, the toll has been put around 5,000.

Japanese Encephalitis, or brain fever, has assumed epidemic proportions since it first broke out in September in the six districts of eastern UP. Copious rainfall during July and August generated the virus in the waterlogged areas of these districts.

According to the district magistrate of Gorakhpur, Dr Om Prakash, the disease was first noticed in the first week of September and within a few days it spread like wild fire to rural areas of the district. Till 17 October, as many as 1884 seizures had been officially recorded in the district, of which 609 proved fatal.

The district hospital and the Baba Raghav Das Medical College Hospital here appear like disaster centres. Hundreds of persons with babes and young ones in their arms wait patiently for treatment. Over 600 patients are under treatment at the medical college at any given time. The bed capacity is about one third.

Given the incidence of the epidemic, make shift arrangements have been made both at the medical college and the district hospital. Despite the extra beds procured for the patients, parents have to sit on the floor with children in their laps while they are administered drips.

Ever so often, the quiet of the hospital is broken by a wail as yet another infant becomes a cold figure on the data sheet of doctors. In fact, the doctors or the district administration can do precious little to save lives. There is no known cure for the disease and all that can be done is to strengthen the immunity system of the victim so that it can battle the disease. The rest is God's will, Dr Ghanshyam Srivastava, medical superintendent, said.

Dr Om Prakash, believes that the worst is over. The epidemic is now on the wane, he said as the weather is changing. Experience is that encephalitis vanishes with the advent of the cold season. Its incidence is confined between July-October monsoon months.

Medical experts said that mosquito carriers of the disease thrive in water-logged areas and on animals, particularly pigs. Research so far has identified pigs as the major carrier of the virus. Statistically too it has been established that the incidence of the disease is marginal amongst the Muslims of the area.

Fish-Killing Disease Affecting North-East Industry
54500037 Bombay *THE TIMES OF INDIA* in English
14 Nov 88 p 17

[Article by Prasun Sonwalkar]

[Text] The entire fishing industry in Assam and other states of the north-east has been paralysed due to the fish-killer ulcerative disease syndrome (UDS). The disease has spread in an epidemic form, affecting thousands of fishermen and others engaged in the trade.

Fish, the staple food of the majority of people in the north-east, is no more served on the dining tables and customers in hotels are politely told of the ban on the sale and consumption of the UDS-hit fish.

So far, no remedy has been found for the disease which was first detected in Australia. Almost all south Asian countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, Burma, Laos and Papua New Guinea have been affected by the disease.

The UDS has also taken an epidemic form in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh where deaths have also been reported. Fisheries experts working on the disease have so far not been able to find a remedy. Because of the scare and the ban on the sale and consumption of fish, there are no takers for even healthy fish from scientifically cultured ponds, throwing a large number of traders and vendors out of the employment.

As a result, price of chicken and mutton has skyrocketed and local papers report frequently about gastroenteritis cases from all over the region.

The disease was first noticed in the north-east in the Hailakandi subdivision in the Barak valley of Assam in April this year. Symptoms of the disease—congregation of the fish over water, abnormal swimming behaviour, red spots on the body, tail rot and head.

Fisheries experts say the UDS has been found the most among fresh water and brackish water fish species. They include wild as well as cultured species, grown in fish farms and ponds.

Initially, the disease was confined to streams, ponds and some tributaries in the Barak valley. But with its detection in Dubri district in September, the entire 723-km-long course of Brahmaputra, flowing through Assam, is believed to have been affected.

The disease spread to Mizoram and Tripura. The ponds, which are formed and fed annually due to the receding waters of Brahmaputra after the floods, have been badly affected. Besides, the disease is now believed to have affected the fish population in Cooch Behar district of West Bengal and is spreading westwards.

Experts say it is spread over a large area by birds due to the feeding on the carcasses of the dead UDS-hit fish. Dropping of bits and pieces of such fish by the birds during flights results in the fish in other waters also contracting the disease.

However, experts in the fisheries institutes in Mymensingh and Faridpur, Bangladesh, say the disease could be the result of a virus with pesticides acting as a catalytic agent. They say ponds and other water forms where the disease was identified are hygienically "below standard" with a low content of alkali and lime.

Mr M.K. Das of the Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute, (CFRI) Barrackpore, visited Hailakandi in June and submitted a report of 16 July. He said there was no incidence of the disease. At the same time, he suggested preventive measures. However, sources in the directorate of fisheries here said the UDS assumed serious proportions only in late July and later in epidemic form throughout the north-east.

Nevertheless, the authorities decided to impose a ban on the sale and consumption of the fish when the Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (CIFA), alerted Assam's director of fisheries on 15 July. The director of fisheries has now requested CIFRI to send a team to study the situation. He has also urged the Central to include Assam in the itinerary of an FAO team scheduled to visit the country shortly.

JORDAN

Number of AIDS Cases Reaches 17

54004504 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 22 Nov 88 p 3

[Text] Another case of AIDS has been discovered in Jordan to raise to 17 the total number of carriers of the killing disease so far, according to a report in Al-Dustur.

The paper quoted the director of the Health Ministry's AIDS Control Department, Hani Shamut, as saying that the boy had received blood transfusions but gave no other details.

However, Shamut made it clear that Jordan imports limited amounts of blood plasma from other countries and the imports are constantly subject to tests and screening before they are offered to patients.

Over the past three years only the death of three AIDS victims were reported in Jordan.

According to Ministry officials, most of the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) cases in Jordan were contracted through blood transfusions.

Last year the Health Ministry announced the formation of a national committee charged with taking preventive measures to stem the spread of AIDS by providing information to the public especially to school children.

DENMARK

Predicted Figure for AIDS Cases in 1990 Lowered
54002436 Copenhagen BERLINGSKE TIDENDE in
Danish 1 Dec 88 p 3

[Article by Henning Ziebe]

[Text] The most recent estimates show that by the end of 1990 there will be "only" 688 cases of AIDS in Denmark, compared to the 2,050 cases previously feared. But these figures must be viewed with caution.

Apparently, the AIDS epidemic is not developing as rapidly as predicted. According to earlier predictions, there would be 2,050 cases of AIDS in Denmark at the end of 1990, but the latest estimates show that the figure will "only" be just below 700 cases. There is a high degree of statistical uncertainty surrounding this figure, however.

All the same, this encouraging report on World AIDS day today is accompanied by some concern among the experts, since it could result in a letup in the battle against AIDS and that would be a catastrophe, they say.

It is pointed out that the epidemic is still developing and there are still more people getting AIDS this year than last year. Thus, a prerequisite for a continuation in the statistical decline in AIDS is that an effective effort be made to prevent the spread of HIV.

The statistical predictions are based on the assumption that the epidemic will continue to develop at the same rate as it has in recent years. The expected number of AIDS cases is calculated accordingly.

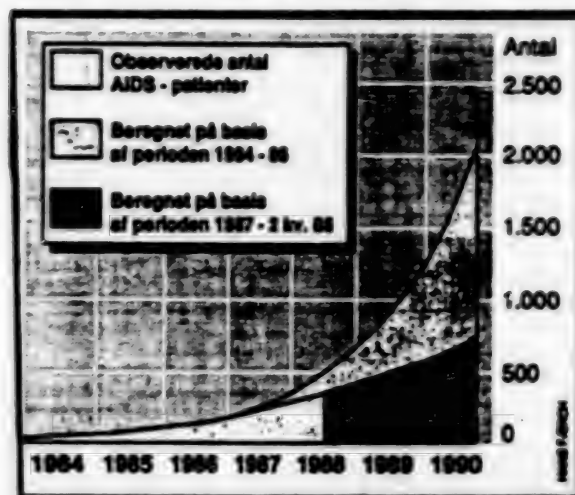
This was done previously on the curve for AIDS cases from 1984 to 1986. A continuation of this curve showed that, with a continuation of that same rate, there would be 2,050 AIDS patients in Denmark by the end of 1990.

Now the State Serum Institute has made a similar prediction, but based on the figures from the beginning of 1987 through the second quarter of 1988. This curve is much flatter and ends with a figure of 688 in 1990. The statistical uncertainty is so high, however, that the figure could vary from 489 to 1,150 cases.

Despite this, the experts at the Serum Institute say it is reasonable to conclude that the AIDS epidemic will hardly develop as rapidly as previously feared.

But there are other reasons why this type of prediction should be interpreted with some caution. The AIDS epidemic consists of at least two epidemics: beginning in the late 1970's AIDS spread among homosexual men and only beginning in 1984 did it begin to spread among IV drug users.

PREDICTED AIDS TREND 1989-1990



1. Number of AIDS patients observed
2. Estimated, based on period from 1984 to 1986
3. Estimated, based on 1987 through second quarter of 1988
4. Number

So far, few IV drug users have contracted AIDS, but if there are 2,000 IV drug users in and around Copenhagen and if half of those who become infected develop AIDS, then this group alone will account for 200 cases of AIDS during the next few years. This possible figure is not included in the most recent prediction, because the prediction is based primarily on the occurrence of AIDS among homosexuals. Thus, the final figure could be higher than the present estimate, experts at the State Serum Institute warn.

Gays' Efforts Yield Results

The use of condoms and fewer casual contacts are the apparent reasons for the slower rise in the number of AIDS victims.

The slowdown in the development of AIDS, which experts now seem to have detected, is credited to the fact that gays became aware at an early stage of the danger of contracting AIDS and they have begun using condoms, but they have also had fewer contacts with men they do not know well, the leader of the Board of Health's AIDS Office, Marianne Soeby, said.

"It was in the gay community that a massive effort was made at an early stage and this is probably the reason behind the results we are now seeing," Marianne Soeby said.

She added that the epidemic still existed primarily in the gay community, although it is slowly spreading beyond these circles.

But no explanation to the slower spread of AIDS can be found other than the active preventive measures taken by gays from the beginning. After all, there is no indication that the AIDS virus, HIV, has changed or become less active.

Conference on AIDS

To commemorate International AIDS Day today, the Frederiksberg Town Council and members of the municipalities AIDS Committee are holding a conference on AIDS at the City Hall.

The politicians want the AIDS Committee to inform them about HIV and AIDS and about the information campaign that is under way. They also want to hear about local strategy and activities.

In connection with this day Mogens Thim (Conservative), chairman of the Hospital Committee, pointed out that 14 percent of the registered AIDS patients in Denmark are in Frederiksberg. "That is an extremely high percentage when we consider that its citizens comprise only 0.7 percent of the total Danish population," Mogens Thim said. Frederiksberg is also commemorating the day with the presentation of a poster painted by Frederiksberg Jette Høgh, with a text by poet Benny Andersen: Life Is Not the Worst Thing We Have.

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

Registration of 2,779 AIDS Cases in 1988 Reported

AU3112155888 Hamburg DIE WELT in German
31 Dec 88-1 Jan 89 p 1

[Article: "Registration of 2,779 People Suffering From AIDS"]

[Text] By the end of the year, 2,779 cases of AIDS have been registered in the FRG. These are 1,110 more than last year. DIE WELT learned this from Professor Meinrad Koch, head of the National AIDS Center in Berlin, who was surprised that the number of cases has not doubled as feared. Koch: "The period of doubling has become considerably longer." He gives the number of people who have died of AIDS as 1,146.

Only the November figures are available from the GDR. According to Professor Niels Soennichsen, chairman of the AIDS Advisory Group of the East Berlin health minister, nine cases of AIDS are known in the GDR. Four patients have died.

FRANCE

Health Minister Announces AIDS Policy

Policy Details Revealed

S4002430 Paris LE FIGARO in French 4 Nov 88 p 16

[Article by Michele Bietry; first paragraph is LE FIGARO introduction]

[Excerpts] A substantial increase in research funds, information and prevention campaigns, better care of patients, and new structures for coordination and eval-

uation are aspects of a government plan that is causing mixed reactions.

Minister of Solidarity and Health Claude Evin yesterday presented the national plan for combating AIDS to the Council of Ministers. Overall, the plan reveals a will to accelerate efforts and improve their coordination. But there has been no fundamental change in policy. [passage omitted]

Claude Evin explained why it was necessary to deploy such forces against a disease which currently causes 20 times fewer deaths than cancer or cardiovascular disease: AIDS is a contagious disease, and it is spreading dramatically. The number of reported cases is doubling inexorably every 11 months. [passage omitted] As nearly as can be estimated, the number of people carrying the virus in France is probably somewhere between 150,000 and 200,000.

The plan being launched by the minister is therefore a long-term one, including, in the short term, a financial effort amounting to 600 million francs and the establishment of various agencies to coordinate and, especially, to evaluate efforts to be made in all areas. [passage omitted]

The plan comprises three main specific points [passage omitted]: information and training, the provision of care for healthy carriers and patients, and research.

1. Information: As the minister said, the fact that no really effective vaccine or medicine exists at the moment means that "prevention in this case is a matter of life or death." [passage omitted]

"It is very necessary to realize that we are at the point where the disease is beginning to spread to the heterosexual population," Claude Evin emphasized. "Communication efforts must therefore be stepped up, and they must no longer be so indirect: the only means of protection is the condom, and we must say so clearly."

A television campaign concerning condoms will begin at the end of November, to be followed by multimedia campaigns in the first quarter of 1989. The mass communication budget will total 50 million francs.

In addition, activities targeting young people, students at the upper secondary level, draftees, and university students will be scheduled this year. Health personnel will receive specific training.

The minister discussed the very ticklish problem of certain high-risk groups that are difficult to reach: drug addicts (between 70 and 80 percent of whom are infected), prisoners (often as a result of drugs), and prostitutes. This requires an interministerial effort, and the matter will be followed up. Plans already call for setting up an interministerial committee on AIDS at the start of December, and those questions will be discussed.

Training will be provided for 4,000 people, notably teachers, so that they in turn can educate young people. They will number 6,000 in 1990 and 8,000 in 1991. A project office will be in charge of coordinating and overseeing those activities, providing liaison among the various government agencies involved, and evaluating the effectiveness of activities. It will also be responsible for helping organizations and associations such as factory councils and young people's movements interested in participating in the fight against AIDS. A total of 100 million francs will be devoted to prevention activities.

2. Care for healthy carriers and patients: The funds allocated to associations assisting infected individuals will be increased and will be used to encourage other initiatives in that area. Hospices for patients who are not hospitalized and have no families or whose families have rejected them will be supported by the ministry. Day hospitals will also be developed.

To cope with the current demand for hospital space, notably in the Paris region and in Provence-Cote d'Azur, a budget of 430 million additional francs is being made available. Medical teams will be beefed-up (200 additional positions, including 30 hospital doctors). Within 4 or 5 years, one bed out of six at the Paris Public Assistance Hospital will be occupied by an AIDS patient. A task force will be in charge of evaluating the effect of the disease on hospital operations and then submitting proposals for the longer term.

3. Research: Funds to encourage research will be increased to 150 million francs this year. [passage omitted]

Here again, an effort needs to be made in France to coordinate and harmonize the research plans of the various teams. The Ministry of Health has counted 128 teams working on AIDS. [passage omitted] For the time being, a scientific council will be set up to allocate the funds made available.

Compulsory Testing Rejected

54002430 Paris LE FIGARO in French 4 Nov 88 p 1

[Article by Gerard Nirascou]

[Excerpts] One can only approve of the setting up of a vast plan to combat AIDS. It would even have been desirable to put the plan into effect sooner because the situation is serious, very serious.

In our country, 4,000 people will die of this disease in 1989. In 1990, they will number 8,000. As early as 1991, the number of AIDS victims will total 16,000, or more than die from traffic accidents. And in the absence of any treatment or vaccine, there is a strong possibility that that progression will continue.

There will always be voices saying that the policy for fighting AIDS has not gone far enough and that we can do better. In this area, one must be careful not to give in to demagoguery.

It is not by chance that the Evin plan, like the Barzach plan before it, resembles every anti-AIDS program instituted in the chief countries affected by this scourge. At the moment, there is no alternative.

Compulsory and systematic testing scarcely makes any sense. Practically every specialist in the world agrees on that point and for a basic reason. What is to be done with those who test positive (who have contracted the virus and are contagious but have not developed the disease themselves)? Various estimates place their number at from 150,000 to 200,000 in France. Should they be locked up, isolated, or made to wear a distinctive badge? What can we offer them in the absence of effective treatment? The answer is simple: nothing.

In the face of AIDS, whose mode of contamination is well known, there is only one effective policy: information and prevention. [passage omitted]

AIDS is here. It kills 40 people in France every day. It will kill more than that 2 years from now. Let us learn to live with it rather than to die from it. [passage omitted]

AIDS Cases Increase, Measures Adopted

Regional Figures

54 002435a Paris LE QUOTIDIEN DE PARIS in French 25 Nov 88 p 10

[Excerpt] The number of declared AIDS cases doubles every 6 months in Ile-de-France, compared to every 11 months in the nation as a whole, Mr Pierre-Charles Krieg and the Ile-de-France prefect Mr Olivier Philip said during the inauguration of a preventive center in Paris.

Over half (55 percent) of the 5,000 AIDS patients so far counted in France reside in our region, whose population (10 million) represents only 20 percent of the national total, Mr Philip said. "The seriousness of the situation in Ile-de-France, which has the unhappy privilege of being the hardest-hit region in Europe" led the regional council to create this CRIPS (Regional Center for AIDS Information and Prevention) for which the city of Paris donated the office space, according to Mr Krieg.

In the same building with the CRIPS (5-7 rue Ridder, in the 14th arrondissement) which opened a month ago is one of the two screening centers set up by the city of Paris, in operation since last March (the second is in Belleville). These centers provide consultations and screening in the strictest anonymity and at no charge, the physicians responsible for them declared during presentation of their first report. In 7 months, the two centers saw a total of 5,100 people, 90 to 95 percent of whom were "high-risk subjects" who had come to request a blood test. The tests were seropositive in nearly 6 percent of the cases, according to the people at rue de Ridder, who noted that the seropositivity rate is 3 in 10,000 in systematic control studies conducted by blood transfusion centers.

Eighty Percent Are Between 20 and 39 Years of Age

Officials at the rue de Ridder screening center also remarked that the average rate of 20 consultations a day, in both their center and the one in Belleville, is rising. They also indicated that nearly half of the consulting patients (43 percent) are between 20 and 29 years of age, and nearly 80 percent are between 20 and 39 years.

National Information System

54 002435a Paris LE QUOTIDIEN DE PARIS in French 24 Nov 88 p 7

[Excerpts] The National Commission on Computers and Liberties (CNIL) gave its approval yesterday to a large-scale epidemiological study in France to be conducted jointly by INSERM and 23 AIDS-screening centers. The study will take a census of seropositive individuals and AIDS patients in order to systematically screen and increase surveillance of patients.

And to think that Mr Schwartzberg was asked to resign from the government to which he had just been named for having dared to say that systematic screening for AIDS was needed! That he was engulfed in scandal as if, suddenly taking leave of his senses, this leftist, this humanist so militant as to be sometimes irritating, had metamorphosed into a fierce LePenist who, through his confusion of evil with illness, was demanding preventive measures so severe they could only lead to the exclusion of those diagnosed.

The innocent Mr Schwartzberg made the mistake of being right before his time. Less than 5 months after disavowing him, the government is making his proposal its own, securing in order to do so the seal of approval of the very serious Commission on Computers and Liberties. The Commission has agreed to the creation of a computer file to count seropositive or AIDS patients if the patients do not oppose this action. This decision shows in fact that France is emerging, slowly but surely, from the period of torpor into which the discovery of the illness and its dangers had thrown it. The new awareness involves two areas. From a health perspective, the potential ravages of AIDS are now known. It is therefore out of the question to delude ourselves at this point or to allow the belief that a vaccine or medication can be quickly discovered. Everything must thus be done to prevent the illness, as efficiently as possible. That is why advertising campaigns to promote the use of condoms—the only reasonably effective means of prevention—are necessary. That is why systematic screening—the only way of cross-checking, tallying, and thus, knowing—is required.

[Passage omitted] It now remains to be seen how this realization, which has occurred primarily among an elite (specialists and government authorities), will be received by public opinion. Will the public derive some wisdom from it, or will it allow itself to be overwhelmed with fear?

Faulty Condoms Ineffective Against AIDS

54002432 Paris LE MONDE in French 15 Nov 88 p 48

[Article by Jean-Yves Nau: "One Out of Three Condoms Are Said To Be Ineffective Against AIDS"]

[Excerpts] The next issue of the monthly 50 MILLIONS DE CONSOMMATEURS (December 1988) will publish a comparative study of condoms marketed in France. According to that study, more than one out of two condoms are of poor quality and more than one out of three would be ineffective in preventing contamination by the AIDS virus. Publication of this study coincides with the forthcoming launching of the Ministry of Health's national campaign to promote the use of condoms.

Tested by 50 MILLIONS DE CONSOMMATEURS were 41 brands of condoms which had been purchased from various locations in January 1988. (The technical file on the comparative test carried out by 50 MILLIONS DE CONSOMMATEURS was assembled by Christian de Thin. The brands which tested best were Olla lubricite and Prophiltex.) As required by French standards, whatever the forms and specialties offered to the customers (sizes, colors, perfumes, etc), all these condoms are made of "vulcanized natural latex." If sizes are respected, there is no required standard for thickness. "All lies are allowed," explains the monthly. [passage omitted]

The investigators of 50 MILLIONS DE CONSOMMATEURS found four cases of condom contamination by germs and molds. [passage omitted]

More serious problems were brought to light through mechanical resistance tests called for by the NF [French standardization] standard. [passage omitted] The monthly stated that "on the whole, the results are not very reassuring. At times, 28 condoms out of the 41 tested have failed, a result short of the limits set by the National Consumption Institute."

The third and last test is the most important one since it tries to gauge "the impermeability of the condoms by measuring conductivity. The condom is thus filled with a saline solution which conducts electricity; it is then plunged into a bath of the same solution. If the electric current fails to go through, the condom is judged waterproof. This test revealed that one or several samples of the 14, out of 41, brands studied were judged porous, some brands (Savah and PH Conseil) having as many as five porous samples out of 100.

Porosity and Contagion

The results of this study confirm the fears lately expressed by both France and the United States concerning the true protection offered by condoms when it comes to contamination by the AIDS virus during sexual intercourse. As a matter of fact, the evidence of porosity

raises serious questions. It should not, however, be concluded from this finding that condoms would be an ineffective preventive method in all cases and should therefore be rejected. Quite the contrary is true, particularly since nothing really allows us to conclude formally that porosity is synonymous with contagiousness. Professor Luc Montagnier (Institut Pasteur in Paris) explains: "In view of the current data, we think that there are very few free viruses in the seminal plasma. Cells carry the virus when it is present in the sperm. These cells cannot go through the pores of a porous condom. Using a condom in all risky situations and fully respecting the precise rules governing its use remains the most important factor." [passage omitted]

GREECE

AIDS Incidence in Armed Forces Reported

54002431 Athens I VRADYNI in Greek 17 Nov 88 p 11

[Text] It has been determined that 43 individuals serving in the three services of the armed forces between November 1985 and March 1988 suffered from AIDS.

Within the context of a survey conducted by the 401st General Military Hospital of Athens and the State Blood Donor and Blood Byproducts Production Center, whose purpose was to show "the extent of the HIV infection in the armed forces," a total of 92,265 personnel from the three services were tested for anti-HIV antibodies.

The test found 45 borderline positive cases. Of these, only 18 (0.019 percent) were found to be positive, tested using the western blot method. This data will be transmitted to the 12th Armed Forces Medical Conference scheduled to convene in Salonica on Friday.

As was made known, there are 22 HIV positive individuals with asymptomatic disease (Group II) in the 401st Military Hospital of Athens.

Of these individuals, 14 belonged to high risk groups. Of the six homosexuals affected, one was both a homosexual and drug addict. Also, of the eight with heterosexual relations, seven, as the communique stated, "had a lax sexual life with relations with foreigners."

The communique stated that HIV infection is a problem in the Armed Forces. There is one borderline positive case to every 5,000 conscripts. Finally, it was pointed out that "the majority of the borderline positive cases include persons of 'high risk groups.'" In "casual heterosexual relations," the percent of borderline positive cases is 36.36 percent.

IRELAND

Campaign To Wipe Out Measles, Mumps, Rubella Launched

54500032 Dublin IRISH INDEPENDENT in English
25 Oct 88 p 12

[Article by Brian Dowling]

[Text] A radical attempt to wipe out measles, mumps, and rubella was introduced yesterday by the Minister for Health, Dr. Rory O'Hanlon.

For the first time a new three-in-one vaccine will be available and it is hoped that all children aged 15 months to 5 years will be immunized before March 1990.

"Our aim is to eradicate these diseases once and for all. We want to do away with the human suffering involved, especially when it is not necessary," Dr. O'Hanlon said.

The Minister also stressed there would be very significant savings to the health services if their target of 90-95 p.c. immunisation was reached by 1990. The new measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine will replace the present measles vaccine given to children aged 2. Dr. O'Hanlon said any child given the measles vaccine should also have the new one.

The MMR vaccine is now available, free of charge, from GPs and the visit to the GP is also free.

The campaign which will be backed by radio, television, newspaper and poster publicity is the first time such a drive had been undertaken. It also marks the first occasion on which protection against mumps has been offered in Ireland and the first time vaccination for rubella is to be offered to boys.

Dr. O'Hanlon highlighted the dangers of each of the diseases:

- Measles—can cause hearing problems, brain damage and even death;
- Mumps—can lead to meningitis, deafness, brain damage and male sterility;
- Rubella—in pregnant women can result in a baby born with damage to the eyes, ears, brain and heart.

Department of Health estimates point out, without an immunisation programme, there could be up to 40,000 cases of measles each year.

The last major attempt to wipe out measles was in 1985 and while, initially, very successful there was a drop in the uptake of the vaccine in 1987-88. The result was a large increase of sufferers—in 1987 only four people were admitted to Cherry Orchard for measles but this jumped to 59 in the first six months of this year.

Dr. O'Hanlon also pointed out that it costs about £20,000 each year to treat a severely handicapped victim of congenital rubella in an institution.

UNITED KINGDOM

New Budget Provides Extra Spending on Health Care

Biggest Boost Received

54500028 London *THE DAILY TELEGRAPH* in English 2 Nov 88 pp 1, 40

[Article by George Jones]

[Excerpts] A £2 billion increase in spending on the health service, the biggest cash boost the NHS has ever received, was announced by Mr Lawson, Chancellor of the Exchequer, yesterday as he demonstrated his resolve to cool the economy by holding next year's public expenditures to the planned total of £167 billion.

Mr Lawson surprised MPs and the City by promising substantial increases in priority areas of Government spending—health, roads, housing, law and order and defence—while keeping to the overall expenditure target for 1989-90 set last January, despite widespread predictions of a £3 billion overshoot.

While reasserting his tight grip on public spending, the Chancellor told MPs that a "rigorous reassessment of priorities", coupled with big benefit savings from lower unemployment, and bulging receipts from council house sales and privatisations, enabled him to announce substantial additional spending on the NHS.

More than £2 billion extra is being provided for the NHS in Britain as a whole, rising from £2.5 billion in 1990-91. Even allowing for inflation, it will mean a 4.5 per cent increase in real resources—"by far the largest increases the Health Service has ever received," declared Mr Lawson.

[Passage omitted] The announcement of extra money for health spending came just hours before a Tory backbench revolt on new charges for dental and eye examinations.

It represented an important change of direction by the Conservatives over the NHS, and was an indication of the influence wielded by Mr Clarke, the Health Secretary.

Last year, many Tories felt that his predecessor as Health Secretary, Mr Moore, had not fought hard enough for increased money for the NHS. As a result, the health service was engulfed in a cash crisis last winter, which led to postponed operations and closed wards.

Tory MPs believe the increased money will do much to improve the party's reputation on the NHS, and to demonstrate the Government's commitment to improving health services while carrying out a fundamental review of the NHS. [passage omitted]

Purpose of Funds

54500028 London *THE DAILY TELEGRAPH* in English 2 Nov 88 pp 1, 40

[Article by David Fletcher]

[Excerpts] The Government's decision to make an extra £1.8 billion available for the English Health Service was widely welcomed last night although both doctors and health service administrators said that the increase could be undermined if inflation rose higher than predicted.

The National Association of Health Authorities said the future looked "pretty healthy" provided inflation did not exceed five per cent.

Mr Philip Hunt, director, said: "If inflation shoots over five per cent next year, every additional one per cent over and above the Chancellor's assumptions means health authorities have to find an extra £125 million."

The British Medical Association said it was "glad" the Government had taken note of calls for higher health spending, but said the increase could be eroded if pay settlements proved higher than expected.

The extra money was a step in the right direction for both doctors and patients, but it might only leave a "modest increase" in spending at the end of the day.

[Passage omitted] But Mr Robin Cook, Shadow Health Secretary, said it was only sufficient to protect existing levels of service and pledged to continue the fight for even more cash.

"The new expenditure figures for the NHS provide the measure of how successful we have been in keeping health at the top of the political agenda.

"We have fought the Government to a standstill, and it has now produced a standstill budget. The NHS is not now going to get worse. But it is not going to get any better."

The increase, the biggest single rise in health spending in the lifetime of the present government, was described by Mr Clarke as "quite spectacular". It is double the amount generally reckoned necessary to maintain existing standards and should allow genuine improvements to be made in the National Health Service, he said.

The increase means that Health spending in England will rise next year to £19.7 billion. The money is on top of the extra £941 million provided for the nurses' pay rise.

The Government is making available an extra £1.6 billion. Health Authorities are being asked to make cost improvements (efficiency savings) of £150 million, while an extra £25 million is expected from income generation schemes, making nearly £1.8 billion in total.

In particular, the money will provide for:

- A 10 per cent increase of £200 million for hospital building, bringing total spending on construction and maintenance to £1.2 billion;
- An extra £320 million for family doctor services;
- An extra £68 million for treating Aids patients, bringing the provision to nearly £130 million;
- An extra £12 million for an expanded programme of nurse training;
- Abolition of National Insurance contributions for those earning less than £43 a week. Contributions will rise by £1.80 a week for top earners.

Mr Clarke said: "The extra cash we are putting in, together with continued improvements in health service efficiency, will enable services to be expanded by significantly more than is necessary to take account of the growing numbers of elderly people, while enabling health authorities to bring their income and expenditure into balance."

He said the extra money meant that resources for health were going up faster than public expenditure generally, and indicated the priority the government gave to the NHS.

But he warned that health authorities would have to continue their drive to achieve greater efficiency, and it would be quite wrong to "fritter away" £140 million by dropping plans to charge for eye tests and dental examinations.

'Mystery' Disease Strikes Swimmers in Public Pool

54500030 Leeds YORKSHIRE POST in English
15 Oct 88 p 2

[Text] Health experts sounded a national alert last night after a mystery superbug struck down swimmers in a case believed to be the first of its kind in the world.

Sixty people suffering from fever, vomiting and sickness were sent for hospital tests after the tracing of rare bacteria to municipal baths in Doncaster.

Councils throughout the country are being urged to carry out safety checks amid growing concern that cryptosporidiosis defied chemicals and other measures designed to kill it.

Armthorpe Swimming Baths, Doncaster, was closed yesterday and will remain so for several weeks while experts go to war on the bug.

About 20 swimmers, mostly children, came in contact with cryptosporidiosis at the learner pool. The other sufferers are relatives or close friends.

Doctors have been told to send anyone suffering from the symptoms to hospital for tests.

None of the 60 needed to be kept in the town's Royal Infirmary but the painful symptoms can last for up to two weeks.

The Institute of Baths and Recreation has been informed and will alert councils and ask them to check their pools.

It is not known how the bug was brought into Armthorpe pool but health officials suspect it may have been brought in by someone from a farm, where it is most commonly found among livestock and in slurries.

Doncaster's community physician, Dr Robert Stalker, said: "The bug causes a bowel disorder which is unpleasant but sufferers make a full recovery."

The chairman of Doncaster environmental services committee Coun Ray Stockhill, added: "We believe the case is the first of its kind in the world.

"We are doing all we can and a specialist chemical firm has been called in to eradicate the problem. The baths will not reopen until we are sure everything is safe.

"We have no reason to believe that other swimming pools in the area are infected but they are being monitored. There is no question of negligence but it is purely an unforeseen circumstance."

Last night, executives of the company brought in, Antec International, of Suffolk, said they were confident they could kill off the bug.

The northern director, Mr David Johnson, said: "This is the first time we've heard of this bacteria in a swimming pool, although we are quite used to dealing with it on farms."

The company uses a chemical which it claims is the only commercial product known to kill every type of bacteria in the world.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy Infects Cattle
54500029 London *THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH* in
English 13 Nov 88 p 3

[Article by David Brown]

[Text] Milk from cows suffering from a deadly brain disease is finding its way into the public supply, but both the Ministry of Agriculture and the Milk Marketing Board say there is no risk to health.

A total of 1,448 cattle, most of them Friesian/Holstein cows, the breed which supplies most of Britain's milk and dairy products, have been confirmed as victims of the fatal illness bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE).

Ministry and Milk Board officials admit that under the system by which milk is collected, by bulk road tanker, it is unavoidable that milk from sick animals is mixed with milk from the nation's 2.6 million healthy cows.

BSE, which is believed to be a form of the sheep brain disease scrapie, has been proved to be transmissible to other species.

A government working party headed by Sir Richard Southwood, Professor of Zoology at Oxford University, is assessing the risks to humans and seeking ways of stamping out the illness which is threatening valuable cattle exports. Sir Richard is expected to present his report to Mr MacGregor, Minister of Agriculture, in the new year.

Mr Keith Meldrum, Chief Veterinary Officer at the Ministry, said: "There is no evidence of either scrapie or BSE being transmitted in milk. It is most unlikely since the agent causing the disease mainly affects the brain, the spinal column and the spleen."

The Milk Marketing Board, which has already lost two bulls in its breeding studs because of the disease, backs the Ministry view.

Milk Board officials are confident that high-temperature pasteurisation will kill anything harmful in milk. They also point out that even though the incidence of BSE is increasing, the sick animals are a small minority of the national herd.

Under new regulations issued earlier this year, farmers must notify the Ministry of any outbreak of BSE in their cattle. If the animals are still alive they must be killed and their brains removed for tests. The carcasses are destroyed to prevent the meat going for human consumption and as a precaution against the disease spreading.

But many vets are critical of the compensation arrangements for farmers, who are paid half the market value of the destroyed cattle. They believe that some farmers may be tempted to sell diseased cows for slaughter before tests are done—with the risk that the beef will be sold to butchers.

The Ministry confirmed this weekend that it is negotiating with a private operator for extra incineration capacity to destroy stricken cattle.

Ministry vets have been forced to burn cattle in open pits and water authorities have complained about the risk of polluting water supplies.

Northern Ireland Livestock Inoculated With Seal Virus

54500031 London *THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH* in
English 6 Nov 88 p 1

[Article by David Brown]

[Text] Farm animals in Northern Ireland have been deliberately infected with the deadly virus which has ravaged seals in the North Sea and which has spread to dolphins around Britain's coast.

Cattle, sheep, pigs and chickens have been inoculated with the distemper-type virus in closely-guarded tests over the past few days to establish whether farm livestock grazing by the sea can catch the disease.

The experiment, in a high-security isolation block at the government Veterinary Research Laboratories at Stormont, Belfast, is the latest attempt to discover how to defeat the virus which, scientists fear, may spread across the Atlantic wiping out seals, dolphins and whales.

Veterinary scientists at Stormont expect the first results within 10 days.

They have already established new information about the virus, which is not exactly the same as that which causes distemper in dogs, but are saying nothing in public until their findings are published soon in the scientific journal, *NATURE*.

Mr Sam McCullough, one of the researchers working on the seal plague there, said: "Although there is no evidence that farm animals are at risk we want to make sure. We will take blood tests within 10 days when we would expect an antibody response."

Not all of the trial animals have been inoculated with the virus. Some have been left to mix with the "guinea pigs" to discover if the disease is easily spread among farm livestock. The animals are guarded round the clock to ensure they never come in contact with livestock outside the special unit.

The nature of seal virus is not only worrying naturalists—many of whom believe that otters are also seriously at risk—but also farmers who live close to the sea.

Thousands of cattle, sheep and poultry feed close to the shore, particularly in Northern Ireland and Scotland.

In the Shetlands there are breeds of sheep which live largely on seaweed; these are most likely to have close encounters with seals and otters.

While the hunt for a cure goes on, there is growing criticism within scientific circles about a lack of co-ordination among veterinary experts.

Researchers at Stormont have complained that, while they have made "rapid progress", their advice has not been sought by biologists co-ordinating seal virus research in Britain.

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